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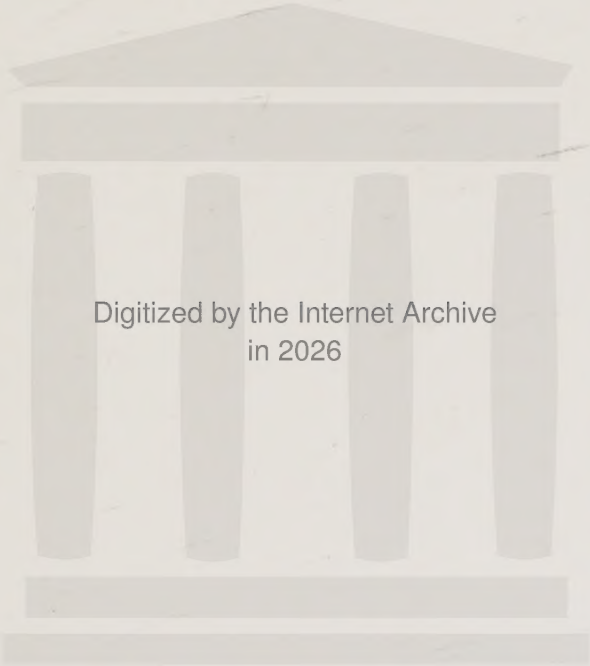

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LETTERS OF JAMES SMETHAM

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Jas. Smetham

From a Painting by Himself.

LETTERS

OF

JAMES SMETHAM

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY MEMOIR

EDITED BY

SARAH SMETHAM

AND

WILLIAM DAVIES

WITH A PORTRAIT

London

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED

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MEMOIR OF JAMES SMETHAM

It is not considered either necessary or desirable to give any long or detailed biography of the writer of the following letters. They tell their own story through the struggles of an earnest life. The apology for their publication, if any such is needed, may be contained in the fact that of all his numerous correspondents scarcely one is known ever to have destroyed a letter he wrote: a circumstance which has made the task of selection rather a difficult one. In the publication of these letters it may be premised that there is no faith broken, no confidence betrayed. For the most part they are the expressions of the life and feelings of the writer, as his pictures were in another form, and claim no closer confidence. Under other conditions, if, for example, the pen instead of the brush had been chosen as his vocation—which might well enough have been the case—a good portion of the matter of them would doubtless have been given forth by that means. Of the letters themselves any extended terms of praise would be misplaced here;

but it seems to me that some of them, in their lightness of touch, airiness, and sportiveness of character, in their quick and visual modes of thought, and their disposition to discern a comic element in the most serious moods and on the darkest occasions—to say nothing of their literary ease and freedom of expression—might be placed amongst the best reputed examples of this kind of writing.

James Smetham was born at Pately Bridge, in Yorkshire, on the 9th of September 1821. The account of his origin and early years will be best given by himself in a letter written in answer to a request from Mr. Ruskin, dated 16th November 1854. It is as follows:—

"Dear Sir—It is kind in you to show such an amount of interest in my scribblings, and to express so much sympathy in my pursuits. I fear you overrate the work, and that my desires and your approbation will not be justified by anything worthy of permanent regard.

"I have, however, a great love for art and all that concerns it, and have devoted my life to its pursuit; nor can I resist the opportunity of informing you what has been the course of my history: not so much because I look on it as at all remarkable, but because you are, I am persuaded, capable of understanding without a long explanation why I should find pleasure in telling it at all.

"Beginning at the beginning, I must inform you

that I am the son of a Methodist preacher, who spent his life in periods of two or three years in various towns of the kingdom with only one object in view. My first awakening to consciousness, as far as I can remember, was in a valley in Yorkshire, outside the garden gate of my father's house, when at the age of two years. I have a distinct remembrance of the ecstasy with which I regarded the distant blueness of the hills and saw the laurels shake in the wind, and felt it lift my hair. Then I remember thinking my elder brother one of the cleverest lads alive, because he drew a horse and a bull-dog in water-colours; and also at four years of age running away on the nearest heath—that was at Nantwich, in Cheshire—and delighting in the little pools, which were called pits. At eight I recall a moonlit night, when the moonlight had the effect of enchantment on me, and I listened softly to the noises of the night. I took to drawing about the same age with a box of water-colours which ought to have cost fourpence, but which, by my frequent asking the price, the good woman let me have for threepence. That was at Congleton, in Cheshire. From that time I formed the desire and design of becoming a painter, and afterwards never had a thought of being anything else, and made my father promise to let me be one. At eleven, from Leek, in Staffordshire, I went to a boarding-school at Woodhouse Grove, in Yorkshire, where the sons of Methodist preachers are educated, or ought to be; and where I ought to have learned more than I did.

There I copied Raphael's cartoons from the *Penny Magazine*. What time was not consumed in drawing was spent in prowling about the Grove, and slipping away to Calverley Wood, and inventing ghost-stories to fit old Calverley Hall. On leaving school I was articled for five years to E. J. Willson, of Lincoln, a Gothic-architect, who wrote the literary part of Pugin's *Examples of Gothic Architecture*. His office was at the Castle, in a round tower; and there I ought to have learned more architecture than I did, but I was always drawing Comuses and Satans and Manfreds. Mr. Willson was very fond of painting, and very kind. He scolded me before my face, and praised me to my fellow-clerk behind my back; and at length, to effect a compromise, set me to draw all the figures about the Minster. I spent a grand solitary year at this work. With a key to myself I poked about every corner at all hours, and twice a day heard the organ-music and the choristers' singing roll about among the arches. I sat on the warm leads of the roof, and looked over the fens, and dreamed and mused hours away there, and then came down over the arches of the choir and drew the angels drumming and fiddling in the spandrils. I made a large and careful drawing of the Last Judgment from the south porch, and had a scaffold up to it to measure it. But I fretted my soul because I wanted to be a painter, and at length boldly asked Mr. Willson to cancel my indentures, who said decidedly that he would not, and that Dewint, the

painter, who was coming down shortly, would put that and other foolish notions out of my head; for painting was precarious, and few excelled in it or could live by it. This he meant, I doubt not, in great kindness. When Dewint came, he said he could sympathise with me, having been in similar circumstances himself, and advised Mr. Willson to let me go, which he did at the end of three years, my father's approbation having been previously secured by myself. I was thus thrown on the world by my own act and deed, and with very little practice announced myself in Shropshire as a portrait-painter, getting employment at once; working when I wanted money, strolling to Buildwas and Wenlock and Haighmond Abbeys, and scrambling to the top of the Wrekin, and wandering in lane and meadow and woodland. I went on after this fashion till 1843, when I came to London and entered as a probationer in the Royal Academy, having previously drawn a little while at Cary's. I made no doubt that getting into the Academy I should keep in, and drew, I suppose, carelessly, for at the end of three months I did not get the student's ticket. I went to Jones to see how I ought to have done my work, taking some drawings with me. He told me not to be anxious, for in or out of the Academy I should succeed. I sent in another drawing as probationer, and got in again, intending to look about me more, but was suddenly called away into the country.

"I went into the neighbourhood of Bolton Abbey, where my father then resided; and here you will

understand me when I speak of the great change which came over my life. The death of my brother (a Wesleyan minister in London) cast a great shade over my wild dreams and extravagant ambitions. I did a great deal for his approbation, and when he had gone my spirit followed him. I perceived that to attain to him was not a matter of fancy or speculation, and 'the commandment' came to me. A complete uproar and chaos of my inward life followed, and I fell into the 'slough of despond.' The beauty of nature mocked me, my fancies became ghosts. I felt my discordances with the spiritual universe; and it was not till my father also died that my soul was stilled and set in order. I had worked on (except for one dreadful period of four months, when I could not work at all, though in perfect health) wearily and painfully; but now I resumed my pursuits with new zest, and devised the plans of study, some of the results of which you have seen. My views of art were changed in some particulars, and I think enlarged, but I dared no longer strive on my old principles and impulses. A salutary fear shut me up in a happy seclusion, and I could not precipitate myself into the battle of life; so I went on painting portraits and interspersing them with fancy pictures, gaining money enough to keep me, and then snatching a month or two for study; now in a large town, now in a little one, now in a remote farm painting the farmer and his family, and roaming in his fields and by the edge of his plantations; then in London.

"I exhibited in Liverpool first in 1847; at the Academy in 1851, -2, -3, and -4, but the last two years my best picture was returned and the portraits put in.

"I ought to mention another feature of my life. While studying I became so impressed with the importance of form as an universal *language* that I was boring all my friends with its utility, and inveigled young men to tea that I might talk myself hoarse in persuading them to draw everything. But they did not profit, and I longed for some sphere where I could advance the cause of drawing as an element of education, and demonstrate my own theories. My fever was allayed by a request that I would undertake the instruction in drawing of a hundred students, who were in course of training to be teachers, at the Wesleyan Normal School, Westminster. I accepted it; and for three years one of my happiest duties has been the fulfilment of my task of four hours a week there. I teach model and freehand drawing, and perspective. The staff of teachers then became my circle, the objects of the institution part of my life; and I completed the connection six months ago by marrying the teacher of one of the practising schools there, who still retains her position. Our united salaries make us for the present independent of painting as a means of livelihood, and I have five days in the week for picture-making.

"This sums up, I believe, all I need care to tell you of my history. Of my purposes, perhaps, I had better say nothing; of my works nothing.

"There is a passage in the second volume of *Modern Painters*, p. 136, § 12, 'Theoria the Service of Heaven,' which I have half chanted to myself in many a lonely lane, and which interprets many thoughts I have had. I love Art, and ardently aspire, not after its reputation (I think), but the realisation of its power on my own soul and on the souls of others.

"I don't complain of want of employment, or anything of that sort; for I have found it easy to earn money when I have set about it, but I have felt the dearth of intercourse on the subject of my occupations, and am pleased with this opportunity of writing to you. With artists generally I have not felt much drawn to associate. In my own associations there is on the part of others little true sympathy with my work. I have to spin everything out of myself; and yet I would not at all be understood to complain; scarcely, all things considered, to wish that things were otherwise.

"I have made my letter quite long enough already, and will only reiterate my thanks to you for the kind spirit in which your note was written.—I am, dear sir, sincerely yours, JAMES SMETHAM."

This comprehensive survey may be supplemented by a few other particulars. The poetic instinct in his young mind was awakened and nourished by the sweet influences of the country. Years after he wrote: "To-day I remembered, when I was eight

years old, leaning out of the bedroom window at Congleton in the moonlight, seeing 'the white kine glimmer' with precisely the same feeling for nature and poetry which has pursued me ever since; and I remembered this incident and the rapture of it, as if it were last night." His lifelong friend, Dr. Gregory, who was his senior by two years, gives a characteristic anecdote of his first day at school. A game was being played in which certain portions of the playground were marked off as "islands." Dr. Gregory, standing on one of these, heard an unaccustomed voice murmur, "One foot on land and one on sea; to one thing constant never." Looking round he saw the new boy, a tall, thin lad of delicate appearance, standing on one foot and playing the other loosely over the line which marked the shore. "From that time," says Dr. Gregory, "our hearts were knit together as the heart of David to Jonathan."

Although his school advantages were not great, his home atmosphere had been favourable to his intellectual development. His father had a good library, and was a deep, clear, unconventional thinker; whilst his eldest brother possessed a mind of no common order, earnest and refined, brilliant and penetrative. A letter written by him to the subject of this memoir on his entrance into the active world is still preserved, remarkable for its intensity and elevated seriousness. James Smetham had also taken with him to school several literary favourites, amongst which were Macpherson's Ossian, and several volumes

of that now almost forgotten selection—or rather collection, for the compilation was somewhat heterogeneous—of literary pieces considered best worthy of note at the beginning of the present century, called *Elegant Extracts.*

He left school at the early age of fifteen, and was at that time placed under the tutelage of Mr. Willson. Recalling this period in 1871, he writes: "Though I never gave my mind to architecture, yet I was familiarised in a wonderful pictorial way with it, and got ideas singularly useful for my ultimate purposes. Mr. Willson set me to draw all the sculpture about Lincoln Cathedral, and I passed a year in the Minster, drinking in the grandest impressions of form and light and shade. Ah me!" he exclaims, "great tower of Lincoln, with the white moon shining on thee—'whiter than my true love's shroud'—how can I forget thee, and all that thou beholdest? O pealing organ, rolling waves of melody along the roof-trees! O wind, breathing solemnly against the vast chancel window, where the youth gazed with wide eyes through at the horizon! O place of dreams, warm leaden roof of transept or tower, where many a summer hour was dreamed away!"

In a fragmentary reminiscence, written about the year 1870, we find the following: "Shade of William Hazlitt, what hours were thine and mine in those early days in the antiquary's study, where the battered helmets and breastplates and long gray swords, eaten into holes by the earthen damps, hung

its walls over the head of the venerable, learned, kind, large-browed, silver-haired antiquary himself! There was the library, and in it the *London Magazine*, and in the magazine Hazlitt's 'Essays on Art.' It is said in books we have read since then, that Hazlitt was a gloomy and rather dangerous-looking man, who seemed as if he were feeling for a dagger. We won't believe it. We will allow him to have been dark and solemn and quiet and Dantesque; but what was mistaken for sinister and malignant was only a knitting the sober brow of *Il Penseroso* frowning away 'the brood of folly without father bred.'" He adds: "We hesitate to re-read at this distance of time Hazlitt's 'Essays on Painting.' We fear to brush off the exquisite bloom of memory—to wind the disenchanting horn which would bring down that lovely castle in the air. Sheltered in that nook by the window, the *London Magazine* at our elbow, what a deep impress of the romance of painting did we receive! It has never departed. It was not Hazlitt who sowed the love of painting in our young mind; for this began long before, when in childish Scotch-plaid skirts we saw that the far-off hills were not green, but an enchanting blue, and wondered why. But it was Hazlitt who, at our own entry into life, sounded the bugle-notes which led the chase among the wizard forests and endless glades of the picture-world. Therefore we fear to send to Mudie's for that delicious book, *The Picture Galleries of England.* If we do, we *won't* be disenchanted; time shall not

rob us of our treasured spoil." Dr. Gregory gives some further particulars of this period. He says, "At Mr. Willson's he corresponded regularly with his elder brother, with whom I was then fellow-tutor at Woodhouse Grove, and his letters were all read to me. He was devoted to and absorbed in his profession as an artist. His residence with Mr. Willson was of immense advantage to him. He met at his table the most select society: artists, architects, and the *élite* of the Roman Catholic clergy, all men of culture, for Mr. Willson was a distinguished member of the Mediæval Church, and his house was a favourite trysting-place for men of genius and rare accomplishments."

After leaving Mr. Willson he spent some time at Redditch and Madeley. From the former place he had the opportunity of making many congenial rambles with his early friend Dr. Gregory, who contributes these reminiscences: "Whenever duty would permit we used to make long explorations together in the charming Worcestershire and Warwickshire lanes and fields. He saw everything with a painter's eye, and his conversation was stimulative, recreative, and restful. He loved not to argue, but to expatiate. We were both at that time disciples and devotees of Tennyson, whose early poems we studied line by line and word by word, as one might study a Greek play."

The impression made upon the minds of the friends by the poems of the Laureate at that early

time may be considered in the light of a discovery, for it was not then the fashion to admire them, as it is now. Indeed, they were scarcely known beyond a restricted literary circle. James Smetham's edition of the Poems was that of 1843 (bought in that year), in two volumes; in which, by the way, he made some charming marginal illustrations. I first became acquainted with him in the year 1846, and remember well his enthusiasm for and enjoyment of the delicate touches and artistic refinement of the early poems of Lord Tennyson. They remained to him an influence during the rest of his life; and perhaps nowhere could the Laureate have found a more faithful treasury of his writings than in this "heart of a friend." Besides appealing to his æsthetic sense they stimulated his artistic faculty, and afforded him subjects for many pictures. He himself alludes to this period in a subsequently written letter: "I remember also a pleasant walk one evening to an old manor-house, which B. G. and myself called 'The Moated Grange.' It lay out of all neighbouring sight. It was deserted:

> The broken sheds look'd sad and strange:
> Unlifted was the clinking latch;
> Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
> Upon the lonely moated grange.

There was a moat and an orchard. Water-rats ran about the edge of the moat, and weeds filled the orchard. We went through the place into a large fireless kitchen, where I piped out 'The Mistletoe

Bough,' to which the large ingle answered. A broken-down carved chest and table, the head of a carved bedstead, and a tumbling stool or two, were all that filled the void. There was a large, wide, oaken, ornamented Elizabethan staircase, with a gate which swung between it and the great landing."

In the month of October 1843 he went to London, and acting on the advice of John Phillip, R.A., and Marshall Claxton, made his admission drawing for the Academy at Cary's. His drawing—"The Young Apollo"—admitted him as probationer. He, however, broke off his attendance there either for want of present means or for other reasons. At this time he painted a little picture, which he called "The Brookside." It was exhibited at Liverpool, then, perhaps, ranking foremost amongst provincial exhibitions. It was thus described and spoken of in a review of the time: "A gem: not the less beautiful and valuable because of its smallness. The attitude, anatomy, and expression of the boy, who is throwing back his head in joyful anticipation of the cool luxury of the brook, are without exception amongst the most exquisite traits of character we have ever beheld. It is a work full of beauty." Nor were these terms of praise too high. Original in its key of colour, of fine tone and easy but firm touch, it might have stood by the side of the work of Wilkie in one of his happiest moods.

His wife reviews his position at this time in these words:—

"The question presented itself to him, How shall I order and direct my life: what shall I aim at? He felt that to give himself up to the pursuit of painting simply and entirely would not meet the need of his nature. Both his moral and mental imperfection demanded a continuous and extended culture, and he began to formulate a plan of life, beginning in a course of long disciplinary study, and intended to combine art, literature, and the religious life all in one. He carried this out. Speaking of this large scheme of culture long afterwards, he says, 'This took me twenty-five years; but my purpose was to paint concurrently with it; so, with rare exceptions, I painted some hours every day and practised every requisite of art—drew every bone and muscle over and over again, sketched books on books full of every phase of nature, studied perspective thoroughly, studied the antique, went through as full a course as any student in the Royal Academy; but alone.' Thus he withdrew from the normal lines of the art career and struck out a path for himself. Looked at from the merely professional or commercial side it was doubtless a great mistake, and was the parent of much of the difficulty of his future life; but regarded from the higher point of vision which recognises the dignity of the whole man in his relations to the moral and spiritual, we may perhaps come to the conclusion that he had the better portion. Certainly amidst all the difficulties of his life he never regretted his decision or thought his course a mistaken one."

To place the accepted basis of his life-course in a clearer light the following extracts from his own letters may be given.

In 1861 he writes: "I do think I am a little sympathised with as a painter who 'has not got on somehow'; whereas in my own secret heart I am looking on myself as one who *has* got on, and got to his goal —as one who if he had chosen could have had a competence, if not a fortune, by this time; but who has got something a thousand times better, more real, more inward, less in the power of others, less variable, more immutable, more eternal, and as one who can afford a sly wink to those who know him, which wink signifies that he is not so sure that he is not going to do something comfortable in an outward and artistic sense, after all. But be this as it may, his feet are on a rock; his goings (so far) established with a new song in his mouth and joy on his head—and 4/6 this blessed moment in his pocket, besides some postage stamps."

Again, in 1863, he writes: "As a *man* I feel persuaded my course of study has been right, and this joy no man can take from me. But as an *artist*—let me reflect. My friends on the outside can see what I was capable of twenty years ago, and how I might have had £5000 in the bank, and been widely known. They are capable of judging of this; but they can't tell how far it was necessitated by my history, my moral condition, and the demands of my moral nature. These have been met, and I enjoy the

blessed results. If it should please God to give me health and strength for a few years longer, I may be able to show them a phase more likely to meet with their approval."

The energy with which he entered upon his projected plans of culture and work, the earnest tension of his mind, and the development of the moral forces of his interior life, combined in the year 1845 to induce a state of profound mental depression; and it was only at the death-bed of his father two years later that the light became clearly revealed to him by which his future life was guided, and he entered upon that high service to which his best energies were subsequently dedicated. Recurring to this period in the year 1872, he says: "One of my most formidable enemies was a vivid and ill-trained imagination. Against outward and inward evils of this kind there existed a very powerful love of truth and purity, and great approval of and delight in the law of God. The antagonism of these two forces between the ages of twenty and twenty-six went nigh to threaten my reason. At length my deeply-wounded conscience was pacified by faith in Christ, and a life of great happiness commenced, which still continues."

From this time life wore a more joyous aspect to him. Work was resumed on the old lines. Study, portraits, with occasional fancy subjects, went on at Warrington, Selby, Manchester, Liverpool, and other places. In 1849 he painted "The Flageolet" (a country boy piping on the grass), "Christ at Emmaus,"

and "The Bird-catchers"; all of which were exhibited at the Royal Academy.[1]

In 1850 his thoughts turned once more to London. In a diary which he kept at this time, he thus notifies his resolutions: "Many things more valuable to me than gold and silver attract me towards another sphere of life. My mission—the mission of the Art I profess—is to those who understand and are waiting for its influences; not to the men who on a narrow path, in a confined circle, are urging their way to heaven without ever dreaming of the existence of those influences, and totally insensible to their high office. I want the society of those who can perceive and sympathise with my aims. I trust that pride is not the foundation of my desire for more communion with souls who love what I love. I see the truth and I love it, and, I think, can henceforth never be content to pursue lower truths than I have been led to perceive. If, then, I myself be trusted to seek 'fresh woods and pastures new,' my spirit pants for them."

It was in the year 1851 that he became teacher of drawing to the students at the Normal College, Westminster, as already mentioned in his letter to Mr.

[1] The following is a list of his pictures exhibited at the Royal Academy as far as they have been recorded: Christ at Emmaus, 1851; The Bird-catchers, 1852; The Flageolet, 1853; Two Portraits, 1854; Counting the Cost, 1855; Robert Levett, 1862; The Moorland Edge, 1863; The Hymn of the Last Supper, 1869. Besides these, he was a frequent exhibitor at the Old Post Office Place Gallery in Liverpool, which did so much towards popularising the pre-Raphaelite movement in art.

Ruskin. This post he filled with pleasure to himself and to the helpful benefit of the students for twenty-six years. Here he found congenial society and formed friendships which gladdened his life; notably with Professor W. K. Parker, that remarkable specialist in science and most lovable of human beings, now departed from amongst us, and Mr. Charles Mansford, whose long-tried friendship and active helpfulness contributed to make so many rough places smooth to the struggling painter. These and others combined to form a congenial circle, the meeting with which was a periodical pleasure, drawing the naturally introspective mind from a too close concentration upon itself and its processes.

In 1854 he married, first settling in Pimlico, but after the birth of his first son he removed in 1856 to Park Lane, Stoke Newington, where he resided till the illness which clouded the last years of his life came upon him in the latter part of 1877.

This was a pleasant and cheery change, on the margin of the great city and yet in the neighbourhood of green fields and rural lanes. He thus describes his home in a letter to a friend:—

"Look at Mrs. Stowe's 'Sunny Memories.' Observe that she spends a day at Stoke Newington, at a Mr. Alexander's, a Quaker. Note that she speaks of 'Paradise,' and then reflect that our front windows overlook that Paradise, and our back ones overlook gardens, now blossoming. All is peaceful. I have a true studio now all to myself, a sanctum in my home

for the first time. I have begun to enjoy it. I walk in the fields and on breezy roads. I am growing familiar with trees and banks and blossoms and clouds. God has given me my heart's desire, and I only desire that I may dwell in Him as peacefully as I dwell in my home."

Previously to his marriage he had depended chiefly on portraits for the certain part of his income, which was pretty well assured and satisfactory. But this source was cut off to him, as to many others, by the invention of photography. In fact, to the portrait-painter, who at that time occupied as necessary and well-recognised a position and function as the photographer occupies now, photography proved fatally disastrous, and many respectable painters who had given themselves to the painting of portraits were ruined by it. He often recalled with pleasure his experiences in this capacity in its revelation of character and broad illustration of humanity.

In the autumn of 1857 occurred his first serious illness, giving intimation, as it were, of the darker years by which his life was closed. In the preceding February he had received from Mr. Ruskin a kindly warning which proved only too prophetic. The drawing referred to in the following letter was the first draught or conception of a picture painted some years afterwards, which he called "The Women of the Crucifixion." It represented the women who beheld the crucified Jesus "afar off"; their countenances suffused with devout anguish and pity. It is now in

the possession of James S. Budgett, Esq., of Stoke Park, Guildford—

Dear Mr. Smetham—I hardly know whether I am more gratified by your kindly feeling or more sorry that you should think it is in any wise necessary to express it in so costly a way; for costly this drawing has been to you, both of time, thought, and physical toil. I have hardly ever seen any work of the kind so far carried as the drawing in the principal face. I shall indeed value it highly: but if indeed you think any words or thoughts of mine have been ever true to you, *pray* consider these likely to be the truest, that it is unsafe for you, with your peculiar temperament, to set yourself subjects of this pathetic and exciting kind for some time to come. Your health is not sturdy: you are not satisfied with what you do; and have to do *some* work that is irksome and tedious to you. If your work is divided between that which is tedious and that which tries your feelings and intellect to the utmost, no nervous system can stand it; and you should, I am very strongly persuaded, devote yourself to drawing and painting pretty and pleasant faces and things, involving little thought or pathos, until, your skill being perfectly developed, you find yourself able to touch the higher chords without effort. I should like to know, if you have leisure any day to tell me, your entire meaning in this drawing. Is it merely the women at the cross with the multitude behind deriding; or have you intended any typical character in it?

I hope Mrs. Smetham is well, and that she will forgive me for being the cause of this additional toil to you.—With sincere remembrances to her, believe me, gratefully yours,

J. Ruskin.

At this time he laid aside his systematic general studies, and devoted himself to making his way as a painter. In October 1858 he writes: "I look back with love and wonder and pleasure and thankfulness at the long sand-lane (with occasional mire) into

which, for the sake, I am sure, of good and right and pure motives, and better results in the end, I diverged some twelve years ago, and in which I sacrificed almost every outward, palpable present form of comfort or success. (Strange, that just as I emerged from it I should be called to suffer!) But I am all through it to the last curve. I have done at least one thing which I intended, and, like Prospero, I have broken my wand and buried my books. Henceforth I belong solely to the outward. It is mine, if spared, to do, to put out, to give; no longer specially to receive. Fool as I am, I am as wise as I expected to be. 'The glory dies not, and the grief is past.' I now, because of the *monumental* way in which I have prosecuted my designs, cannot by natural law lose anything, but must gain by meditation rather. If I know little, I have learnt the bearing of things—have learnt to admire, to appreciate—richly to enjoy. But the most delightful consequence just now to me is that as the whole stream of labour goes to the outward, I begin to see the results of work."

In 1859 he sought to make his way into book illustration, but without much success. Not, however, from a want of imaginative power. He had the most fertile and ready pictorial invention I have ever known. His failure to find any extensive vocation here was perhaps rather to be attributed to his want of the organising faculty to adapt himself to the material conditions required, not only technical, but in a certain persistence and aptness for business

requirements on which so much depends where commerce is concerned. His want of any decided success here led him to conceive the idea of etching his own designs at a cheap rate, and of issuing them quarterly to subscribers. When his project became known, about six hundred subscribers sent in their names. To a mind teeming with pictorial imagery, and longing for the means of putting outside of itself a portion of its artistic wealth without spending too much time in the process of elaboration, this constituted a very successful medium, and it was with enjoyment to himself and satisfaction to his clientele that this plan was continued for three years. In connection with this he received the following from Mr. Ruskin :—

My dear Smetham—I received your interesting letter with great pleasure, and you may use my name in any way you please among your friends, but I would not have it in public prints except unconspicuously and alphabetically under letter R. It is impossible, however, to see you just now. I am just finishing *Modern Painters*, and can really see not even my best friends, among whom I am proud to class you. With best regards to Mrs. Smetham.—Affectionately yours, J. Ruskin.

Of one of these etchings, "The Last Sleep," Mr. Ruskin wrote—

I think the last *very* beautiful indeed, and it is quite a lesson in etching to me just now, which I much wanted.

Later also he says—

These etchings of yours are very wonderful and beautiful; I admire both exceedingly. But pray, on account of the

fatigue, don't work so finely, and don't draw so much on your imagination. Try and do a few easier subjects than this Noah one. The labour of that has been tremendous.

The etching here alluded to was one of the building of the ark, containing many figures, elaborated to a high degree of finish.

After a while, when he had completed a respectable number of etchings, which were collected under the title of "Studies from an Artist's Sketch Book," he became somewhat dissatisfied with the point as an interpreter of his conceptions, being laborious, and excluding colour. He modified his plan, substituting an oil-colour sketch or drawing in the place of an etching, for which he charged the moderate sum of three guineas; afterwards elaborating the workmanship and charging nine guineas. Of course this narrowed his subscription list; but many of his friends were glad to possess one of his graceful conceptions at so cheap a rate. He called this plan his fortification —or, as he often wrote it, 40fication; his aim being to supply forty members in the year — as being a defence against pecuniary needs. It had many advantages and some disadvantages. It gave him the means of expressing himself in numerous colour studies which were adapted to his peculiar capacity. Naturally these varied in quality and value. Some of them were charming in choice of subject, in colour, tone, and sentiment; others less so: but in all was to be traced the hand of the poetic mind, and some of them were so happy as to be called veritable gems. One of these

in my own possession represents two male figures in a panelled chamber, one with his legs stretched out before a wood-fire, his hands in his pockets, reflective, listening, the other touching a lute by his side. A side window shows a landscape covered in snow. The glow from the fireplace is given with considerable richness and harmony of tone throughout the room. The whole was intended to illustrate Milton's "Sonnet to Mr. Lawrence," in which he had yet managed to put some personal touches of the painter and his friend. Another—a water-colour—represents a mysterious traveller draped in a shawl or plaid hasting over a heath, backed by a storm-cloud. Behind him in the distance an ass is seen grazing, whilst just in front of him is a milestone marked with vague figures. Serious and impressive, I believe this was intended to symbolise to some extent his own life and aims at the time of painting it.

In 1869 he braced himself up for a higher effort by taking up a subject more ambitious than any hitherto engaged upon. It was that of "The Hymn of the Last Supper." The history of this picture dates back to 1854, when, attending one of Mr. Ruskin's lectures at the Working-Man's College, he was induced to show Mr. Ruskin some of his books of drawings, which Mr. Ruskin took home for their better inspection. This brought from him a letter in the following terms:

DENMARK HILL, 15*th Nov.* 1854.

MY DEAR SIR—I am quite amazed, almost awed, by the

amount of talent and industry and thoughtfulness shown in these books of yours. What is the nature of your artistic occupation? I am very anxious to know all that you are willing to tell me about yourself. Please let me keep the volumes at least till Tuesday next. I cannot look them over properly sooner; and meantime send me a line, if I may ask you to take this trouble, telling me what your real employment in life has been, and how your genius has been employed or *un*employed in it.—Faithfully yours, and obliged, J. Ruskin.

This letter inaugurated James Smetham's acquaintance with Mr. Ruskin, and drew from him the autobiographical reply already given. Mr. Ruskin's letter was followed a day or two afterwards by the request that he might be allowed to show one of these books at his next lecture. This was accordingly done, when the lecturer drew special attention to the great originality of one of the drawings on a theme so frequently painted as that of the Last Supper. This caused James Smetham to dwell on the subject until it had taken a more distinctly pictorial form in his mind. He says in a letter: "The sentiment of the subject has possessed me; a large space of deep unsearchable gloom in the room where they are assembled, leading off into other portions of the house, and the face of Judas waiting a moment outside to listen to the hymn."

The subject was commenced on a canvas three feet in length. He was occupied upon it during the winter of 1868 and 1869, and in the month of April in the latter year he wrote to his friend Mrs. Taylor: "On the evening before Good Friday, *i.e.* on the

evening of the Last Supper, as we commemorate it, I got 'The Hymn' finished, but without at all trying to complete it by then. I was rather pleased at the coincidence."

The picture was afterwards exhibited in the studio of his friend D. G. Rossetti, where it was seen amongst others by Mr. Watts, R.A., who said, "It must be considered a great picture though it is a small one." The picture was sent to the Royal Academy Exhibition. Mr. Watts was a hanger that year, and it found a place on the line, where it received a good deal of notice from thoughtful people.

Encouraged by the success of this picture, he proceeded with a good heart to the painting of two large subjects: one, which he called "Hesper," a poetical composition five feet long, and "The Women of the Crucifixion," already mentioned, of somewhat similar dimensions. These pictures were completed in 1871. Writing to a friend, he said: "These two pictures ought to establish me, but art is so precarious that I dare not allow hope or fear to have play, and so try not to think, but to *do*." These pictures were purchased by Mr. Budgett, and remain in his possession. They were sent to the Royal Academy for exhibition. One was rejected, one doubtful: both of them were returned unhung.

This may be said to have formed the crisis of his professional career as far as the public was concerned. The subsequent rejection of "The Dream of Pilate's Wife" and "Prospero and Miranda" crushed out his

hopes of ever meeting the public as a representative painter. From that time he sought to do no more work of an ambitious kind, and I believe he never sent anything to the Academy afterwards.

And yet there was something noble in this work which might have claimed a recognition amidst so much that was ignoble and trifling. "The Dream of Pilate's Wife" was a large serious conception carried out worthily in its treatment. She was represented as having raised herself on the couch in the silence of the night, and with closed eyes was groping in uneasy perplexity. The corrugated covering of the couch suggested the turbulent nature of her vision, and aided in some way the impression of the "many things" she was suffering in the tragical presentment. Perhaps there may come a time in the history of art when its higher function shall be more discerningly recognised, when the world will turn back to such a picture as this, and pass many acres of artfully-laid-on paint to look at it and drink in its profoundly impressive spirit and sentiment.[1]

But if appeals to the public were more or less abortive, James Smetham was backed by many appreciative and loving friends: at this time none more so than Mr. James S. Budgett of Stoke Park, Guildford, who with a nobleness and generosity more than rare in this world, relieved the pressure of his circumstances and the uneasiness of his mind by aid at once

[1] This picture is now in the possession of J. F. Hall, Esq., Sharcombe, Somersetshire.

timely and substantial. He claimed to be a sleeping partner in his business transactions, and held the self-elected post as long as he, James Smetham, lived, securing to him all the advantages possible during the sad years of his later life. Other friends, notably Mrs. Brames Hall, Mr. John Frederick Hall, Mr. J. Fishwick Stead, and Mrs. Steward, by their long-maintained sympathy and stimulative appreciation, were very helpful, and always ready by the suggestion of a personal visit or a run to Scotland to relieve the jaded brain and overwrought faculties.

Amongst these friendships those of F. J. Shields and D. G. Rossetti must be mentioned as of high value and importance to him, artistically and every way. I believe he first made acquaintance with Rossetti at the Royal Academy School in 1843. It was renewed when he came to settle in London in 1851. I remember he took me to see Rossetti in 1862, whom I then saw for the first time. He occupied a flat at the top of a tall house near Blackfriars Bridge. The little room in which I saw him was hung round with his wife's pictures, who at that time lay in her last illness. The windows commanded a panoramic view of the river and its neighbourhood. There were occasional correspondences and intercourse between the two friends up to the year 1863, when the relationship became more friendly and brotherly. An arrangement was made by which James Smetham should spend every Wednesday at Rossetti's studio, paint there all day, pass the evening at one of the

studios of the circle or with friends at Rossetti's house, and remain there until the next morning. This was after Rossetti had taken up his residence at Chelsea. This arrangement continued until the spring of 1868, when the temporary failure of Rossetti's eyesight drove him from his easel into the country. They were warm friends and correspondents until the last clouded years. To the end of his life Rossetti frequently spoke to me with tenderness and affection of his old friend, whose ultimate sad state of depression, I believe, often added a dark hour to his own. To Mr. Ruskin also he was indebted for much wholesome stimulus and encouragement. Neither to Mr. Ruskin does the friendship appear to have been a barren one, since he writes of his death as being "one of the most deeply mourned losses to me among the few friends with whom I could take 'sweet counsel.'"

Relieved from immediate anxiety, James Smetham proceeded during the winter and following summer to complete many pictures in various stages of advancement, as well as to commence others. The result was that in the autumn of 1873 he was able to have a private exhibition of his works in his studio, to which he sent out cards of invitation. A characteristic letter received in response from his friend D. G. Rossetti is worth reproducing—

KELMSCOTT, LECHLADE, 27*th Oct.* 1873.

MY DEAR SMETHAM—Thanks for the card you so kindly sent me. I wish heartily I were now looking at your pictures, but

am not likely to be coming to town just yet. You know that your work is of the kind that I really enjoy, because you have always an idea at the heart of it; and what I hear from friends about your latter doings makes me sure that they would excite my admiration even more than former ones. Owing to your plans of life, you have remained as yet much more in the background than could possibly have been the case had your works been more widely seen. This state of things must, I firmly believe, change ere long, and such change will be quite as truly a gain to the higher kind of English Art as to yourself. Your work is the result of mental as well as of artistic gifts, and must prove permanent. — With kind remembrances, ever your friend, DANTE G. ROSSETTI.

The result of this exhibition was a liberal harvest of sales amongst appreciative people. Lord Mount-Temple bought his study for the "Hymn of the Last Supper;" from him, and from Lady Mount-Temple, he had much warm sympathy. This, however, was his last outward success. Wanting the potent diploma of public praise or popularity, his works and himself were left unnoticed by the busy world. The fine fibre of his mind ultimately gave way. He sank into a profound melancholy from which he never recovered. Ere the darker days had quite closed upon him, his generous friend and helper Mr. Budgett came forward with unstinted kindness. Mr. Frederic J. Shields and Rossetti were very substantially helpful (nor was this the last of their kindnesses): the former made a selection of his works, which were exhibited in the studio of the latter. Rossetti acknowledged having received them to Mrs. Smetham in the following terms :—

3rd Feb. 1878.

Dear Mrs. Smetham—This morning the pictures have arrived, and many of them have quite delighted and astonished me by their extreme beauty. Indeed they are, in colour, sentiment, and nobility of thought, only to be classed with the very flower of modern art. His extreme isolation of life can alone account for such work not having found a more extended field of encouragement. . . . Yours sincerely,

D. G. Rossetti.

Important sales were made here. But this closed the account. The pencil was laid aside, the hand had lost its cunning. The light of his fine intellect faded. He abode in the silence of a closed spirit. The abundant kindness of his friends, the endearments of an affectionate family, the most skilful medical treatment —all failed to bring back the retired activities. He died on the 5th of February 1889. What is mortal of him rests in Highgate Cemetery under the inscription : "I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness.'

But though his earthly history was thus closed in darkness—darkness to the human intelligence—shall it be said or thought for a moment that in this aberration there was a failure of the life-purpose, that it was destructive or nugatory to the long training and defined scope of a lifetime? Certainly not. Eternal Being does not work by waste and failure. Spiritual growth and advancement are carried on as infallibly as organic development. There are no mistakes, no failures, with the Eternal Purpose and Operation, spiritual or natural. My own feeling is, that in this case a new dispensation was necessary, new lines

of being required, and this was the foreclosure. Why the body should have lived when the light of the soul had passed or lay dormant, I do not know. But who shall know what are the processes by which a soul is moulded and advanced to its ultimate scope? Only this we know, that the blossom must fade that the fruit may ripen, and that the tree lives potentially in the dry seed. But if we shift the point of view to a higher plane we may perhaps gain still clearer light. It is only in the dark night that the myriad stars of heaven become visible. To attain the immortal the mortal must be destroyed. When every temporal hope is crushed and every earthly light extinguished, when the old stays are broken down, and the divine support itself appears to be withdrawn to the mortal apprehension, then rebirth into the unconditioned sphere of spiritual freedom is at hand. It will be remembered that it was not before the suffering Christ had cried, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" that He could bow the head of His fulfilled mission, and say, "It is finished!"

For myself, I may add, our friendship was warm and faithful, of that kind of which a lifetime rarely affords more than one example. So enduring and deep-rooted was it, that the time of his departure was marked to me, ignorant of his illness and many hundreds of miles away, by profound mental disturbance otherwise unaccounted for; thus furnishing one more instance of the loving lives which in death are not divided.

It was in the year 1846, as I have already said, that I first met him at Warrington, where he was painting the portraits of some distant family connections. His appearance in youthful manhood was striking; indeed his personality was always noticeable as specially characteristic. He bore the stamp of an intellectual beauty strangely attractive. His hair grew in a sort of reckless profusion, tending to the leonine in mass and hue, not reddish, but a low-toned chestnut. His face was harmonious and proportionate, the features delicate, the forehead well pronounced, lofty, and expansive; the nose aquiline, not over-prominent; the mouth firm, rather small, delicately cut; the lips ample, inclining to fulness; the chin refined in mould. He always shaved, only reserving the side-growth, as the beard was unusual when he was young, and he was conservative in his personal modes. His figure was tall and rather spare, with a slight tendency towards the student's stoop. He always wore a frock coat, a loose necktie, the bow carelessly tied by his own hand, and invariably clothed throughout in black. There was a sort of wavering or undulating motion in his gait, slightly expressed, and sometimes a certain movement with the hands indicated—how may it be described?—as if feeling or groping towards the Unknown in the endeavour to seize something not wholly out of reach, but still eluding the grasp. This was quite unconscious to himself, doubtless, and not marked, but when observed was significant. The expression of the eye was

feminine in softness, but at the same time wide and earnest, laden with the spirit's message. His manner was distinctly reposeful, and had nothing of haste or fidgetiness in it. He was always gentle, kindly, and courteous to all. I never heard him use a harsh tone or saw him assume a commanding manner to any one at any time. He was patient and forbearing in all things; reserved in speech on ordinary occasions, never interrupting another, easily overborne in talk, saying nothing often when he felt and thought much. One did not always get at his opinion easily, and it might have been supposed on some occasions he had none, but on waiting inquiringly for it it was given in a decided form, clear, nervous, unmistakable.

His conversational powers were remarkable when he was in the vein, but so unforced that unless moved to speech I have known him to remain a whole day almost without uttering a word. When he did speak he never failed to command a hearing. Whether serious or jocular, one was met by a freshness of view and aspect at once arresting. I remember once he kept a roomful of persons for a long time in fits of laughter describing an old gentleman he had seen in an omnibus take a pinch of snuff. He began by picturing in a humorous way the personal appearance of the subject of his story, giving at the same time a speculative diagnosis, so to speak, of his character. He was described as absorbed in reflection, when it suddenly occurred to him to take a pinch of snuff. The box was accordingly withdrawn from his pocket;

then he seemed to forget his purpose, relapsing into a brown study, which was circumstantially analysed and expatiated upon in the narrative; after which he again paused dreamily, as before; then his fingers were plunged into the box, his supposititious course of thought being again followed by the narrator. Finally, the catastrophe lay in his taking the pinch of snuff. It is impossible to reproduce the grotesque drollery which he put into this whimsical narrative. It was heightened by touch after touch of fanciful burlesque which only the natural gift of humour can impart. Many examples of this faculty of humour will be found in the letters.

He was possessed of large literary powers, as these letters will amply testify. With him the literary taste and feeling were an endowment; not the factitious investiture of the time. Books to him, in his early life particularly, were "a substantial world both pure and good." His mind, however, rather dwelt in the abstract region of ideas than in that of fact and form. He did not affect much science or technical study of any kind. The authors of name and note who have always been recognised as the world's teachers were more or less thoroughly studied and remembered by him. Fragmentarily (for he made no claims to academic scholarship) the literature of ancient Greece and Rome, more fully Dante, Chaucer (read, as I remember, in an old black-letter folio), Shakespeare, Milton, and the chief succeeding writers, were appropriated in no superficial way. He re-

membered them, and it was one of the charms of his conversation that by some slight touch or allusion he so often recalled a phrase or a line to those who knew, which added light and point to his utterances. The substance of what he read was made his own by the double force of form and language, for he generally embodied his reading—always his serious reading—in drawing, symbolical or otherwise, on the margin of the book he read or in his note-books. His diction was pure and nervous, and held a concentration of thought which appealed directly to the hearer. There was an impress of the spirit's power on all he said distinctly removed from the commonplace, even when concerned with commonplace subjects. It seemed as if there was breathed about him an atmosphere of subtle intellectualism, of which even inept people were conscious, although they did not quite understand it. Both in his written prose and in the desultory verses he wrote—some of which are subjoined to this volume—the same compression of phrase and adaptability of expression are clearly noticeable.

His modes of study were inexorable. Every morning the assigned portion had to be completed before his brush was taken in hand. He had a large, wide-margined Bible in which he tabulated pictorially all he read. Verse or chapter, the fact of its having passed through his mind was duly registered, and took its place afterwards as a part of his being. He had an interleaved Shakespeare, and this too bears ample evidence of the recording hand as a help to

the appropriating brain. But indeed it would be impossible to specify his work in this kind; it is far too abundant in quantity and too multitudinous in detail.

He never much favoured the exercise of his literary power in the way of publication. It was only by the persuasion of friends or for some special object that he was induced to appear in print. With the exception of a few stray poems published in early manhood in *Blackwood's Magazine*, and some also in later Wesleyan Journals, the only examples of his writing before the public are four articles printed in the *London Quarterly Review*, with the following titles: "Religious Art in England," 1861; "Life and Times of Sir Joshua Reynolds," 1866; "Alexander Smith," 1868; "William Blake," 1868. The essay on Blake was in great part reprinted as an addendum to the second edition of Gilchrist's *Life of Blake*, edited by D. G. Rossetti, who considered the article to contain the best and most penetrative review of the life and character of Blake that had up to that time been published.

Of his religious life I shall not here enter into any close or exact analysis. Religion—the large sense of the subjection of everything else to the soul's relationship with God—was ever present to him, earnest, real, the one important moulder and factor of his life. He was born a Wesleyan, as has been said; he remained one in spirit as well as form. It suited him. Wesleyanism may be said to be a religion of expression, and thus differing from all forms of Quietism. It is specially social in its economy. It seeks by bringing

soul in contact with soul to kindle and maintain the heavenly fires. It encourages no solitary brooding, fosters no lonely struggles, but bids them come out into the light of day, for revelation and redress if it be possible. Perhaps by nature, certainly by breeding and education, this was suited to James Smetham. The enforcement of expression, whether by words or forms, was a part of the mission of his life. It was nearly related to his artistic faculty, and might have been a condition of it. "It is well for poor man," he says in one of his letters, "to put his thinkings as quickly as possible outside of him ; for when he dies 'in that very day his thoughts perish,' and who cares what he thought? Meditate on this, and either write or draw all you think." He allied himself closely to his community, became a class-leader—a valuable and helpful one—and remained so as long as his health allowed it. He had the fearless courage of his opinions, and never would stand on a false footing, even for a moment. If there was any danger of a misunderstanding, or the least necessity for doing so, he at once avowed himself a servant of the Cross. Not that religion was ever dragged into his ordinary intercourse : he had a sense of the uselessness of that, but it remained with him as the central motor of his life, and was never concealed or ignored when he came into close contact with those who might have misinterpreted him. His duty was fulfilled as he saw it to the utmost. I remember once he left me during a pleasant sojourn we were making together

in the Isle of Wight in order to join his weekly class, though there was no other reason for his leaving at that time. It was perhaps amongst the people whom he thus met that his usefulness was most felt and valued. The policeman on his beat, the young shopman, the tradesman at his counter, together with many young students and others of a wider culture, still remember with gratitude his sustaining aid in the life-struggle, his warm and appreciative sympathy. The large nature extended a helpful hand where its expansive breadth could be felt, though not fully understood.

His life-beams were laid on grand lines. His conceptional view of life was a noble one. It lay in the clear apprehension that the main purpose and object of it—the only real and essential one—was educational in the widest sense of the term; that the soul was born into this world in order that it might be expanded, elevated, and perfected to the divine standard. Towards this end the mechanism of his life was arranged, and his more serious attention wholly directed. All contributed to this, and it formed the key to the right understanding of his life course. Even his art became to him but a means towards the attainment of this lofty purpose. To carry it out thoroughly the most laborious and detailed plans were entered upon; not merely mental ones, but all definitely expressed in lines almost appalling in their elaboration. Piles upon piles of pocket-books and note-books were filled with the pictorially drawn

results of his readings, his thinkings, his relationships with the world, his mental conceptions, and his spiritual aspirations ; some of them interwoven with a network of connecting lines which could only be disentangled by himself. Whatever he did or wherever he went, whoever he met or by whatever circumstances he was surrounded —all went into the register and contributed to the tabulated sum and tale of his life. Nothing that happened was lost or wasted ; just as every grain of sand and fibre of wood contribute their mite to form the structure of a building. Amongst these records may here and there be found the most exquisite little pictures elaborated with a loving touch to the most marvellous degree of finish, where he has dwelt upon some incident or conception of special importance. Others are slight, barely indicated, with a name or a letter only by himself understood ; in other places they are merely hieroglyphics.

It was a noble conception, to build a monument of a life by expression in order that no experience of any kind should be wasted or forgotten. Perhaps it repays the builder : it repaid him, doubtless ; but alas ! without the guiding hand, the leading eye, to others it remains a blank as far as instruction goes : only a wonder, the miracle of a splendid intention carried out, a lofty purpose accomplished. For here, if we could but read it, indeed lies the veritable history of a Human Soul in its course through this world written out in full in a rare fashion : its hopes, its fears, its struggles, its sorrows, and its joys, all em-

bodied or indicated in a visible form. But although they will never be completely deciphered here, they must still be intelligibly charactered

> Where all pursuits their goal obtain,
> And life is all retouched again ;
> Where in their bright result shall rise
> Thoughts, virtues, friendships, griefs, and joys.

The system of "putting everything outside of you" as marks or indications of the road-march of life, he called *Monumentalism*. The manner in which this was usually done was by what he called *Squaring*, that is, enclosing each design, however slight, within quadrangular lines and putting a date to it. The books in which the results of his reading were thus stored were christened *Knowledge Books*. Other terms occurring in these letters, well known to his circle, are those of *Ventilator* and *Ventilation*. From his early days he maintained a more or less regular correspondence with his tried friends in the usual letter form, but this was not found adaptable to all occasions. He devised another. It consisted of several sheets of note-paper, each sheet cut horizontally into three slips, which were then stitched together in pamphlet form. He generally kept some half-dozen of these in his pocket-book, and when a thought arose which he considered worth noting, it was pencilled down in one or other of them ; it might be whilst waiting for a train at a railway station, on the top of an omnibus, walking in the street, or sitting by the fire ; thus they gradually got filled up,

and were then posted to their destination. Some, however, were retained, for one reason or another: these were consigned to a box labelled, "Suppressed Ventilators." The designation "Ventilator" arose from one of his friends having first dubbed these quaint epistles "Idea-ventilators." Afterwards it became shortened into "Ventilator," and the mode of writing was spoken of as "ventilation" and "ventilating." Ere the term became thoroughly domiciled in the friendly circle, a lady, one of his correspondents, very much astonished her mother by exclaiming, "Dear me, you have sent my dress to the wash with a ventilator in the pocket!"

This system of writing down himself on every occasion became a part of the daily routine, and had the double advantage of fixing the fleeting moment in a substantial and tangible form, as well as that of affording relief to an oppressed and over-burdened mind. In the latter capacity it might have appropriately borne the motto of Wordsworth's lines—

> To me there came a thought of grief:
> A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
> And I again am strong.

This sketch would not be complete without mention made of a defect or inadequacy of character, which acted as a great hindrance in his professional career. It was that of a want of power to meet and contend with the demands of the outward, or even the ability to recognise its inexorable claims. In this world we must not only have wings for the empyrean,

says a German writer, but also a stout pair of boots for the paving-stones. James Smetham never realised this. He would work industriously, setting a value on the results of his labour, and then leave it, oblivious of exhibitions or other means to have it seen. This, of course, is not sufficient, as he knows who has pressed to the fore. Not until it was absolutely required did he ever turn his attention seriously to the sale of his works, and it generally had to be accomplished at a disadvantage. It was not that the question of the maintenance of a family was absent from his mind; it had an abiding place there, and elaborate systems were laid down to meet it; but they remained in the shadowy realm of ideal projection, and were not brought into action. This insufficiency to meet external requirements unquestionably gives the key to the lack of greater success in his profession. It was not so much the artist who failed as the man of business. But even in his pictures sometimes the same requirement made itself felt, in the want of a certain completeness and absoluteness of treatment which is called for, although the work may be slight. For him it was enough to have clearly set down his conception, and perhaps for some of those who knew him, and loved his work; but for the public, which only sees precisely what is put before it, it was not enough.

In order to assign the right position to the art-work of James Smetham it will be necessary to look backward for a moment.

He entered the field of art at an anomalous time. On his coming into it old foundations were shaken, new ones had not been laid. He was naturally endowed with a pictorial style, a mode of expression peculiarly his own: just as Wilkie's was his own. It did not bear translation—did not brook reforming influences; it only required development. After Wilkie had been in Italy his art as an expression of character was ruined. Its individuality was destroyed, the life-spirit which vivified it and appealed by inward potency was eliminated. It could afterwards only speak by qualities of brush-work. Its words were the echoed words of others, its thoughts incarcerated, as it were, in an unfamiliar and imperfectly appropriated medium. This was very much the case with James Smetham. Some of his early work indicated an individuality of character rare to behold. It was the outcome of the old broad school, soon to become moribund and finally extinct. His touch was ample and firm, his colour rich, harmonious, and glowing, character well expressed, and the picture always well grasped. Then came the adverse influences—adverse to him, at all events—Photography, Pre-Raphaelism, and Ruskinism. He had not the power to resist these. They bore him down. After a hard fight with the public, they had won their way, and soon held their own. The great revolution which then took place can hardly be imagined by the younger generation of Painters. He who would realise the difference between former and present modes—be-

tween the former broad and synthetic school and the modern analytic one—let him set before him in landscape, say, examples of Girtin, Cox, or Dewint, and any good representative of the most recent school, and let him note well the difference between the two kinds. In the former he will be struck with the eclectic power displayed; all is sweetness, simplicity, spacial largeness; nothing used but what is wanted, no confusion or distraction; only the expansive breadth and freshness of nature. Oblivious of pigment, he smells the hay and sniffs the marsh freshets. He meets the wind with uplifted brow. The landscape lives in palpitating light. He looks, as it were, underneath the picture, and feels the inward vitality that throbs and pulsates beneath its surface. It is a conception of the mind, not a work of the hand. It seems as if it was only for a moment that it is flushed with effluent gleams, and he looks expectantly to the next phase, when the big cloud shall advance with its shadow, and gloom and gray shall be where there are now silver and gold. Then turn to the more recent interpretation. Academically it is right: there is no false drawing, no erroneous perspective. It is called a picture, but it is really a study of the form and face of nature, exact in its facts, literal in its truthfulness, exhaustive in detail; but it is the picture of a corpse, not that of a living organism. The painter does not seek any longer as his main object to enter into the living spirit of nature, as they did, but only to depict its appearance and external form, without

any sympathy with it as a symbol of life and ever-changeful emotion. Not only of the painting of landscape is this true, but also of the figure. Let us take a picture, say, by Raeburn, as about the latest exponent of the broad school, and approaching the period under consideration. Let us place this beside a work of a similar kind of the modern school—the best—not for criticism, as we are simply trying to illustrate a period in art, but for comparison. In the recent one we shall find an attention to detail, an elaboration of minutiæ, a sense of manipulation—a *paintiness*, in fact—not found in the other. The painter of the broad school has been thinking of the man, not of his picture. He has obliterated himself. We forget it is a painting. We make a new acquaintance, and meeting him in the street, would like to take him by the hand and exchange a friendly greeting.

I do not know if I have succeeded in placing before the more youthful of my readers thus hastily the differences between the two phases of art in question. It was this difference, on the very line of its shifting, that James Smetham had to meet. If it could have been met absolutely, bravely, uncompromisingly, he would have triumphed. But who is independent of the spirit of his age? In the history of art no such thing was ever known as purely independent workmanship. He was constrained to modify his processes, his point of view, and in doing so he lost the best part of himself, what was entirely his own.

Others who threw themselves absolutely into the new and advancing spirit of the time succeeded; he who still clung to the departing fashion had to stand aside, whilst the more express disciple of the newer phase took his place.

Perhaps it was in the poetic idyll of not too elaborate a finish that his artistic mission was best represented. The inward pressure, both of form and idea, sought continually to relieve itself in expression by the shortest and least encumbered way. The "poetic idyll," as revealing a sentiment of the soul rather than representing a material fact, seemed to be his peculiar vocation in art; and it may be that it is the fault of general ignorance, and not that of the painter, if people do not see more distinctly the aim and intention through that which is done, and build the nobler conception from the inadequacy of the means by which it is sought to express it. If the painter only worked for those who have the best right to look at pictures, he might save himself much trouble in battling with the elaboration of his material,—a process which as often obscures as reveals the inward intention of the mind. So far is this now beginning to be recognised in art that in some schools a slight and impressional treatment is sought for artificially, the attempt being made to stimulate the spectator to a creative effort of his own rather than to fulfil all the conditions of complete and actual representation. Its true and legitimate use, however, lies in the endeavour of rich and inventive pictorial minds to

express rapidly the outlines of their thought by suggesting its leading features and indicating rather than trying vainly to embody that which the pencil can only partially reveal; and this is unquestionably the nobler aspect. Cheap ignorance can detect and denounce a piece of careless or indifferent drawing, or a passage of colour not rendered by the literal hues of nature, but it takes the artistic eye and æsthetic sense to discern the nobler qualities of creative power and the divine insight under the impetuosity of an impatient execution and the restraints of a not wholly pliable material. It may be prophesied that this aspect will one day furnish the key to a new phase of art, the present one being almost effete, exhausted by the predominance and overwork of the imitative faculty appealing to the vulgar elements of an untutored realism which does not know how to discern the difference between what is a mere study and that which constitutes the nobler effort and the wider mission of a picture.

It was on some such lines as these indicated that James Smetham's art-course lay: that in which the thing to be presented is rather prefigured and symbolised than fully and clearly expressed. Fitful passages of colour reminding one of what is best in art, touches of invention that mark the poet as well as the painter —always preference given to and stress laid upon the end, rather than a waiting on the threshold of the means; his appeal was to the mind rather than to the eye, to the subtle rather than to the gross sense.

Work such as his will always reach those to whom it is addressed. To him it was no question as to whether his audience was likely to be a large or a small one; only that his message should be faithfully delivered and his life-purpose, as such, should be fully accomplished. Whatever the measure of external success awarded to it, can any life with such an ideal as this before it be counted a failure?

William Davies.

LETTERS

*** It will be observed that the literary quotations in various parts of these letters are not always verbally exact, as they have apparently been made from memory and sometimes slightly altered to suit the text. It has been thought better not to restore them to the original reading.

LETTERS

To W. D.

28th August 1853.

Last night I had a walk twice round Vincent Square by starlight (after the prayer-meeting, which, I assure you, is a source of much hale and calm enjoyment to me). There was a broad, vast light in the west and golden stars above it, and my spirit went upwards into it. I thought about you. I am beginning to enjoy my life with a more direct and unquestioning will. I have had so many great inward shocks (something like the overthrow of the "Palace of Art") that I have touched the joys of existence with a timorous finger. Health, love, friendship have seemed to be, not unreal, but more than I dare use for my own delight. The thousandfold web of life had to be woven; the anchors "entering within the Veil" had to be thrown out; the foundations and ramparts of study had to be dug and builded. I seemed like a pilgrim in spirit: I dared not tarry in all the plain. There were the everlasting hills, and there they are still,

and pilgrim I must yet be; but with, I trust, a different feeling. Christian meets with Hopeful, and they "fall into discourse"—the two happy simpletons—and then fall to congratulating themselves on the increased happiness of "the way." Swedenborg says that the angels are always advancing towards their spring-time. The oldest angel is the youngest. There is something in the idea, not for the angels (bless them), but for you and me. I feel more like a child than I did, and so do you. I am incomparably happier than in my spring-time. I don't think life need be so very incomplete a thing as some think it (and we in some moods). Actually I begin to realise a sense of shapeableness. My delicious "knowledge books," as you call them, are so tangible, so orderly, so soothing, so vital, that they have wrought my soul into a condition—a most specific condition—difficult to express, but inexpressibly charming. It is as if my past life was not dead, the thoughts still bloom and live and put forth new shoots and blossoms. It is like an inward realisation of the "Domain of Arnheim"! I want not fame, but *life*; the soul's calm sunshine; Life in the eye of God.

Of his work as a Teacher of Drawing to the students at the Wesleyan Normal College he writes:—

6th December 1853.

I AM filled to-night with a sense of gratitude. In this quiet parlour, on this foggy evening, by the cheerful candle-light, I have mused on my estate, which I

see to be, in one sense, only "a little lower than the angels."—I am

Past Thymiaterion in calméd bays.

What an honourable position I hold at the Normal Institution! I say this fully aware of the secular insignificance of it. What if I only mark with chalk on a black-board the same old diagrams! It is the Creative Truth gleaming white on the Abyss of the Infinite. When I feel there is some definite use to be made of knowledge, and see illustration polishing with use, embarrassment going, influence increasing, great truths developing—find myself loved and supported by a warm-hearted band of men who are doing the same work, joined mind and spirit in a common bond—I cannot desire more. "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?"

To W. D.

8th March.

"Lady of Shalott" gone to the R.A., with all her imperfections on her head. I did not think that I should have sent it: did not dream of trying, till one morning I got in an effect that stimulated me to try. You have also gone, and a female portrait; but till I know if they are accepted, best say nothing about them. They may be all returned, so little certainty do I feel about the Academy. If received, they will probably be ill-hung. If noticed, the "Lady of Shalott" will be abused. It is a picture which lies

very open to abuse, and can be made fun of by irreverent folk with great ease.

I have worked so closely at it that I am palled by it; and yet, I believe, there is good in it. I have a great dissatisfaction with all I have done, though I must not say this to any but my intimate friends, scarcely to any but you; they would take it for granted that I ought to know best, and would not buy. I don't mean that at all, but only that I have not yet done what I should like to do, and am able to do.

I wish, as a painter, that I had a greater dramatic interest in life. I think I can enter into it and distinguish character, and with little labour could realise it; but I have a strange indifferentism about me, no animal spirits to spur me on in this direction: not lazy, but easily content with beauty. The world cares a little about beauty, but much more for dramatic situation and a story. In the Vernon Gallery the "Marriage à la mode" overwhelms everything else in public interest.

The "Order of Release" of Millais is a very fine specimen of what I should like to aim at. I can find nothing wanting in that picture. Concentrated and universal interest, intelligibility, and realising power, coupled with a sense of beauty of ordinariness glorified by expression. The ugly, red-haired, thick-lipped Scotch child, fast asleep, with a pouting smile, on its mother's shoulder, is a conception far above those horrible little beauties that mothers love, and put blue sashes round, curling their hair in papers.

I have been reading promiscuously lately—*Haydon's Life*. I cannot tell the emotions it produces. I gloat over it with a strange fascination, and cannot grasp it yet with any philosophy. *Keats' Life*, also, and *Letters* by Monckton Milnes, which leaves this line ringing in my soul—

Mighty poets in their misery dead.

I should like if I had language to talk much about Haydon and Keats with you.

Keats seemed to have a penetrating imagination which saw truth by instinct, but he had no *reasoning* in him, as he himself says. His letters are like the flight of small hedge-birds: hop, hop, hop—twitter, twitter, and every now and then a flight into a little oak-tree. They are tender-legged, too, like linnets, not having much to stand on. You can scarcely remember a word of them, and yet you cannot help being pleased with them. But his poetry! His "Hymn to Pan"! "Ode to Nightingale"! "Hyperion"!

Never let people measure poets, or artists in any material, by common gifts. There is a shrine where the spirit is at home, is dignified, is priest-like and inspired.

To W. D.

Pimlico, 2*nd Dec.* 1854.

The act of writing out my thoughts to you the other day was the death-blow to the set of feelings

they described. As I was walking to-day I remembered that this week I have been calm and happy, and only *remembered* the storm, and then my mind slipped away into a stanza of Chatterton's on the conclusion of a tempest—

> List! now the thunder's rattling clymmynge sound
> Sheves slowly on, and then embollen clangs,
> Shakes the high spire, and lost, dispended, drowned,
> Still on the gallard ear of terroure hangs.
> The winds are up; the lofty elmen swangs
> Against the levin, and the thunder pours,
> And the ful clouds are brest at anes in stonnen showers.

Chatterton was a Titanic young mortal. He has been compared to Kirke White, who was a milk-sop (in mind, though a lovely fellow) beside that stormy young poet sage who used to make his fellow scholars sit in Bristol meadows and listen to him on the ground while he told "sad stories of the death of kings." I should like to have seen him in the fusty library of St. Mary Redcliffe, drawing forgeries for architectural designs, said to be done by Master Cannynge, laughing to himself as he, by instinct, spelt his words without learning, by the mere force of sympathy; and made a thought burn more fiercely by the fire of an uncouth word or phrase "alyke twaie brending gronfyres."

How dreadful it is to think of such a life as his. I was struck with a phrase of Gilfillan's last night. In his *Literary Portraits* he says he sent the first volume to a friend who, in reply, said "Why you have sent me a list of shipwrecks."

I was led to look into G.'s book to see what he says about De Quincey, who, I see, is collecting and publishing his Essays.

What a queer, mystic, sublime, inscrutable, fascinating old mummy he is! Throw your mind back to the days when, fifty years or more ago, he wandered in London streets, and what he says of himself in the *Confessions* then, and fancy that he has lasted on till now, and is winking and blinking yet, quoting Latin passages out of Father Maremme, a learned Jesuit, "page 1461," which he "read thirty years ago," and backing up the quotation by another from Lactantius, and another from Mimnermus, and finishing by a queer tale about a Kalmuck Tartar and an Emperor of China! Now the fact is, *that* man has wasted his life; and one can only, in one's soul, use him as Samson used the honey out of the dead lion — "Out of the strong came forth sweetness."

Somehow there is a divine instinct within us which decides that pre-eminence—using the term in its final sense—shall not be given to mere intellectual strength and prowess.

Dec. 1854.

CHRISTMAS approaches, a charmed time to me. I hear its music afar off,—the song of the angels, the breathing of the bells, but most the divine song from out the central glory. I feel like a swain "simply chatting in the rustic row." It has begun, it is descending in the sloping line from the Infinite — a

wave ebbing from the other side of the ocean to break ere long on the high shore of the world, faint with distance. A revolving carol that traverses the spheres always, and once a year is heard among our stars. The angelic "waits" go the round of the universe, and when Christmas falls they come—

> Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace;
> Peace and goodwill to all mankind.

Do you not hear it—a filmy melody like a starbeam? No, it is lost again, for the wind shook the perishing leaves, and their whispering drowned the music: but I heard it, and it is ten thousand miles nearer than it was — the attenuated trumpet-note, the fine silver-trumpet note, long drawn out, like a gossamer thread, and the thrill of the harp-string, something also answerable to the fife, keen, like a star in the nebulous music, and a wind-borne voice buoyed as the phosphoric crest of a wide wave of vocal sound—these, mixed, yet distinguishable, for one instant I heard from far beyond where the phantom clusters of astral world-fire grow pale by reason of distance, in an abyss between two milky veils, so ghostly that they were visible and invisible, veils which were galaxies. Across that abyss, as a small meteor fluttered and fell into the night-gulf, so I heard that music. And on Christmas morn I know that they who sleep, but their hearts wake, will hear one full carol and feel the shining of the glory; but it will not stay, only the music will linger in them

all day, and the glory will brood over their heart, and some divine sentence from the lips of the King will come up every hour to make them wonder at its depth and meaning. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

The following letter gives an account of his first visit to Mr. Ruskin :—

To W. D.

5th February 1855.

I WALKED there through the wintry weather and got in about dusk. One or two gossiping details will interest you before I give you what I care for; and so I will tell you that he has a large house with a lodge, and a valet and footman and coachman, and grand rooms glittering with pictures, chiefly Turner's, and that his father and mother live with him, or he with them. There were two gentlemen and two ladies, and a boy like your brother Ned, who were somehow related to him, who came to dinner; and if all came to all, I daresay he has a cat,—but let that pass.

His father is a fine old gentleman who has a lot of bushy gray hair, and eyebrows sticking up all rough and knowing, with a comfortable way of coming up to you with his hands in his pockets and making *you* comfortable, and saying, in answer to your remark, that "John's" prose works are pretty good. His

mother is a ruddy, dignified, richly-dressed old gentlewoman of seventy-five, who knows Chamounix better than Camberwell: evidently a *good* old lady, with the *Christian Treasury* tossing about on the table.

She puts "John" down and holds her own opinions, and flatly contradicts him; and he receives all her opinions with a soft reverence and gentleness that is pleasant to witness.

The old gentleman amused me twice during the evening by standing over me and enlightening me on the subject of my own merits, with the air of a man who thought that I had not the remotest conception of my own abilities, and had therefore come to "threap me down" about them. "I never saw anything to equal them [the sketches]. Why, it seems to me the labour of a life; besides, you must have,"—etc. etc. He finished by saying, as if he had taken it to heart and considered himself personally ill used, in a confidential tone, "I wonder you would trust them with John: you paid him a great compliment to send them at all. *I* wouldn't. I have not let them come down out of the study for fear wine or anything should be spilt on them. Why, I wouldn't," etc. etc.—and for fear lest I should lose or injure them in taking back he sent me home in his carriage.

The old lady was as quaintly kind. "Has John showed you this?" "Has he showed you the other?" "John, fetch Contet's for Mr. Smetham to see:" and to all her sudden injunctions he replied by waiting

on me in a way to make one ashamed. "You must come in the daylight, John has heaps of things to show you, and—can you get away when you please?" etc. As these are in reality traits in "John's" character, I have given you them at length. I wish I could reproduce a good impression of John for you, to give you the notion of his "perfect gentleness and lowlihood."

He certainly bursts out with a remark, and in a contradictious way, but only because he believes it, with no air of dogmatism or conceit. He is different at home from that which he is in a lecture before a mixed audience, and there is a spiritual sweetness in the half-timid expression of his eyes, and in bowing to you, as in taking wine, with (if I heard aright) "I drink to thee," he had a look that has followed me, a look bordering on tearful.

He spent some time in this way. Unhanging a Turner from the wall of a distant room, he brought it to the table and put it into my hands; then we talked; then he went up into his study to fetch down some illustrative print or drawing; in one case, a literal view which he had travelled fifty miles to make, in order to compare with the picture. And so he kept on gliding all over the house, hanging and unhanging, and stopping a few minutes to talk. There would have been, if I had not seen from the first moment that he *knew* me well, something embarrassing in the chivalrous, hovering, way he had; as it was, I felt much otherwise, quite as free and open as with you

in your little study. To *his* study we went at last, and over the fire, with the winter wind sounding, we spoke, as you and I speak, about things I should be sorry to open my heart concerning to scarcely any; only of course he guided the conversation. A fragment or two will give you the key to it—

J. R. "And did you *pray* during that time?"

J. S. "No. I ought to have done so, but I was obstinate and discouraged."

J. R. "But was there no one near you to tell you that prayer is often long unanswered?" etc.

. . . . . .

J. R. "I can understand this life well as the preparation for another, but not its incompleteness in itself; when man finds out what he is fit for, and is able to do it, he dies."

J. S. "Yes, but the individual must prepare for the other life by passing through and promoting the advancing civilisation of the race."

J. R. "If life here is to be for itself as well as the other, I can understand it; but if not, why should we toil? let us throw all our encumbrances away, and live on bread and milk, and think of the other world alone."

J. S. "But the practical part of the question has staggered me. If best, let us do it. But how? What *action* must the world take?"

J. R. with a smile. "Turn shepherds and agri-

culturalists; they are free, and happy, and simple, and could also be holier. I don't know but that art —painting, poetry—are devices of Satan."

J. S. "I should be sorry to think so. I can't think so. I believe I am doing my right work, and am happy in it," etc. etc.

. . . . . .

Over the chimney-piece of the study was a copy he had made from Tintoret, a Doge in his robes adoring the infant Saviour.

J. S. "According to your principle that men should represent all subjects in the costume of their own time, and we were to paint this subject, it would be well to substitute Lord John Russell for the Doge in a surtout, and place his hat on the pedestal here."

J. R. knowingly. "I don't flinch from it; yes, if it would not look well, the times are wrong and their modes must be altered."

J. S. "It would be a great deal easier (it is a backward, lame action of the mind to fish up costume and forms we never saw), but I could not do it for laughing."

J. R. "Ha! but we *must* do it nevertheless."

He had two drawings, portraits of Turner, in his study; one done by Count D'Orsay.

At the door. "We shall hope to see you here again (reiterated by the old gentleman and lady), and you will allow me some day to come and look at *your*

pictures;" and taking my hand in both his with great gentleness, and looking in my face, murmured (I think) "The Lord be with you."

As I had got quite enough for my money I "chevied" — (don't be offended at a somewhat frequent use of this word, I like it)—and was in a sort of soft dream all the way home; nor has the fragrance, which, like the June sunset,

Dwells in heaven half the night,

left my spirit yet.

Of a painter's difficulties he writes:—

Surely few persons have any idea of what it is to be a painter; where first of all the mind within is taxed to conceive, to feel, to suffer, or excitedly to enjoy every new subject, and then has to search the earth over for ever-new materials to enable it to realise the idea, materials lying wide apart in the most different associations. The scholar has his library round about him. Southey can spend his fourteen hours a day with his books, far removed among the lakes, going his mountain walk at his appointed hour. The painter can do no such thing. He wants a gourd: he goes to Kew, and spends his day, but the gourd is not growing, and his picture must be at the exhibition before the gourd blossoms. He wants a costume, and has to find it and haggle about it with a Jew, or hunt through Marlborough House Library for it. He wants a sailor's head, and

goes to St. George's in the East, not easily to find it; to walk much and idle about much, and then only imperfectly to accomplish his object. The primroses for his bank blow in the woods of Kent, and the anemones and hyacinths. The mill wheel turns slumberously round miles and miles away in another direction. The bit of wild wood scenery is accessible with trouble and expense, but the weather—*just when he has time*—is gray and cold, and the east wind prevails. It would be the risking of his life to paint, as he desires, that ashy gray and green tree root, because he has already a cold, and the ground is damp; and yet his picture would be engemmed by it, and he hankers after it. The golden day arrives when he could go into the woods, but the primroses are dead, the hyacinths drooping, or the fancy picture must be put on one side for the more remunerative portrait.

Carry out this train of thought, and you will wonder how a complex picture gets painted at all.

He thus describes a walk to Leigh :—

To his Wife.

28th July 1855.

When I got to Preston junction I found there was no conveyance. . . . I had a grand walk. White mists lay on the fields on either side; trees, dark, still drooping, hung round the silent meadows, out

of which came a close rich odour of new mown hay. The sky was full of that after sunset green-silver glow with deep blue above, and immense fragments of storm cloud in wild shapes floated low down in the sky, through which the rising moon in one direction opened numerous and delicate rifts and bars of dappled light, and *over* which hung the stars few and white. Solitude, stillness, and the presence of these grand images, which all seem to embosom more truth and emotion than man can fathom, raised me into a mood more exalted than usual — the *romantic* mood; which I take to be based on the presentiment of the immortal mood.

To W. D.

10*th August* 1855.

I HAVE read "Maud," and the rest of Tennyson's last volume. I suppose you have read it too. It must live, like all exquisite art—and as art it is exquisite—an episode of life with the commonest romance-plot and the paltriest moral, but wrought out with the lyrical changefulness of the life of this our time. A very complete story, told with flying hints and musical echoes; as though Ariel had piped it in the little wild island of the *Tempest*.

The poetic power which can swallow newspapers full of business, bankruptcy courts, sanitary commissions, wars, murders, and medical reports on the adulteration of food, and then reproduce them, as the

conjuror brings out his coloured horn from his mouth after a meal of shavings, *is* poetic power.

What I object to in it is an objection fundamental, and is not so much against it as a work of art, but as a moral work. The old tale. Thinking and feeling men, in a time when civilisation has grown rank, and the fat weeds of peace rot on the Lethean wharf of Time, are perplexed beyond measure by the social and moral problems of their era. They have been accustomed to regard their offices of Philosopher or Poet as of vastly more importance than they are. *They* are the Regenerators. Read Tennyson's poem called "The Poet," and see how one "poor poet's scroll" is to shake the world. But they have more pride than power. Now and then such ferment of the nations, in the disgusting rancid simmer of unregenerate peace, or in the blasts and thunder-rockings of war, arises that they feel it a solemn duty to leave their pastoral hills and pipe a prophecy to still them or to heal them. The Red Indian physician is not more powerless. The spirits "will not come when they do call on them." Their watchwords, their secrets, are as silly and as successful as Master Slender's in the procuring of a wife (*Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act v., Scene v.): "I went to her in white, and cried *mum*, and she cried *budget*, as Anne and I had appointed; and yet it was not Anne, but a postmaster's boy." The fact is that Poetry is to delight and adorn and supplement the happiness of man; it is one of the good things which God will

not withhold from them that love Him. Painting has no mission but to make men happy, teaching what truth it can steal from the eternal fountains. And Philosophy is to pass round by the Cross and be baptized, and then it is to make the Intellect happy by throwing glorious magical light on truth. But the Regenerators are not these.

"Mr. Poet, what is the remedy for an evil peace?"
Mr. Poet storms and raves, and answers, "WAR"—
That is "*Mum.*"
"And what is the remedy for a horrible War?"
The poet smiles, and whispers, "Pe-a-c-e"—
That is "*Budget.*"
"And yet it is not Anne, but a postmaster's boy."

Nothing for it, my brave boy, but war to the knife and to the death with every other gospel, though an angel from heaven preach it. Not half poetry and half gospel, nor half philosophy and half gospel.

In this respect we will not even sharpen our coulters and axes at Philistine grindstones, and without disputing about the extent to which this must be done, or may be done (*must* be, in some respects, else we must needs go out of the world), I cannot help sympathising with Miss Greenwell's [1] tone of mind on this subject.

As a general principle, I say, "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in the thing that he

[1] Miss Dora Greenwell, at that time a voice in our little circle, now, alas! silent here.

alloweth;" and let the hesitancy always lean to the *safe* side. If we can bear the prophecy of Balaam and the vaticinations of Saul, without cleaving to them, or being held to be of them, let us hear them while we can glean good, and before they use witcheries or begin to blaspheme.

I would have you, on this point, when you write to Miss G., refer her to a fine passage in *Modern Painters*, p. 133, § 8.

This is the great quarrel I have with it, and all such morals. The poetry, the art, is, as I have said, exquisite. The Rose Song is a very skilful example of the absorption of poetical feeling. The "purple light" of love "flushes the soul" in the first assenting blush, and the universe is coloured with it. The eyes see red, and only red. The red man dances by his red cedar tree, and the blowing, floating song compasses the earth till the West is East in the iteration—

> Rosy is the West;
> Rosy is the South;
> Roses are her cheeks,
> And a rose her mouth.

It ought to be read through ruby spectacles.

The Shell Song is as airy and finished as the little whorls and delicate frills of one of Brother Parker's[1] lovely specimens of the Foraminifera, and answers well to an unvarying condition of a mind in anguish, viz. to be riveted and fascinated by very little

[1] Professor W. K. Parker.

things, and to have a racking sense of beauty. I remember a similar feeling on a mossy hill-top watching a silver thread of water steal through the moss alive with little brilliant insects.

The new stanza of "The Daisy" and the "Address to Maurice" are very precious.

> And should some ship of battle creep
> Slowly beneath the milk-white steep,
> And through zones of sun and shadow
> Glimmer away to the lonely deep.

Quoted from memory; if you have not seen it, it will give you an idea. Two quiet orderly rhymes—a restive leap all out of rhyme—and then Imagination curbed, and gracefully, but with a flickering movement, submitting to a third rhyme in honour of Law, which it is too gentle to break.

EASTBOURNE, 23*rd Aug.* 1855.

I HAVE been, in the dusk of the evening, taking a walk along Pevensey Level—a quiet, broad, seaside road; the wind soft and cool; the sky orange, most soft in the west, but with leaden, purple, ragged clouds floating here and there in masses and wild flakes about the sky, and dragging streaks of rain across the darkening downs. In the east, a large, rose-coloured, steadfast cloud arising from fresh blue-gray banks of sinking nimbi, with the summer lightning incessantly fluttering in its bosom, like thoughts.

Yesterday I sat by the sea and began to write in a little book. I thought that I would write something to publish. It seemed that perhaps I might ease something of that sense as if a reservoir were straining at its banks in the moonlight among Yorkshire fells.[1] Do these feelings mean that it is one's duty to write? I can often not interpret that wild stirring, most aptly described in the little poem you read me of Acton Bell's;[2] figured also in the sublime journey of Sir Bedivere with the load of Prince Arthur on his shoulders.

> He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
> Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.

It is not that my belief and opinions are unfixed, or my sources of happiness imperfect. If these would give calmness, I should be calm always. It is not that I do not know how to fill my time; I know it well. I have made the most deliberate choice of principles, pursuits, studies; and yet this inward goading and lashing comes uncalled for, and will not let me rest. Suddenly, often when it has become almost painful, it disappears in a suffused sweetness and sublime comfort. Miss Greenwell's remarks about happiness were opportune, and did me good. I fear that we must be content to be pilgrims in feeling,

[1] Referring doubtless to the Holmfirth disaster of 1852.

[2] I think this must refer to Emily Brontë's fine lines beginning, "Ay, there it is, it wakes to-night." Not "Acton," but "Ellis" Bell.

coming now and then to Elim, where there are wells and palm trees, but for the most part (*vide* the grand fragment on "Will," in Tennyson's last vol.)—

> Toiling in immeasurable sand.

Not, however, with halting footsteps, but seeing, nevertheless, the "city of habitation," not as from the hills of Beulah, bright and near, but as when

> Sown in a wrinkle of the monstrous hill,
> The city sparkles like a grain of salt.

Colossians III. — What a rich, full chapter! Surely it will transform the whole mind, well and prayerfully to study such words. This is the way of peace, and to find it let us only *receive* these words, study them, roll them over and over in the mind, and, as oil makes the joints supple, so shall we feel our spiritual nature penetrated with the strength of the words spoken to us. I think, seriously, that we are too superstitious, in our want of simplicity, in our wish to be independent, original, and that we even miss *that* aim. Let us first produce the intense summer calm of spirit which ought to dwell in us richly through the word of Christ, and then in the brooding light of heaven all knowledge will be simple and easy, and our minds will play freshly, and pluck no crude or unripe fruit. The only truly grand people I have known are those whose moral simplicity licked up, like sunlight, the fœtid, exciting, sickening, uncertain torch-flames of intellectual pride.

Who are the wise? I know who the *learned* are—

> With eyes well practised in Nature,
> With spirits bounded and poor.

Who were Heman, Chalcol, Darda, but moral thinkers, genuine men, sleeping under the stars, and revolving, revolving, revolving, till truth came by midnight—simple, pure, white, like a visiting angel, and dwelt with them?

8th Jan. 1856.

I HAVE just finished *Villette* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, having been seized with a desire and determination to know the whole Brontë literature; half impatient that I should be so swayed out of my regular course as to study with interest five novels. But indeed these things, though they contain some elements of the ordinary "founts of fictive tears," are of another cast and purport to all other similar books. They are—Currer Bell's particularly—so far autobiographic that one looks on them to be important revelations of a life that has been lived, and of thoughts that have been thought; no frivolous, unworthy, ambitious life either, but something pure, strong, deep, tender, true, and reverential; something that teaches one how to live.

I know this, that I perceive principles and motives and purposes nobler than my own in several aspects of that quiet, shy, observant, and yet powerful nature which calls itself "Jane Eyre" and "Lucy Snowe," and hovers over Shirley and Caroline Helstone as their presiding genius and instinct.

It is of no use for me to spurn the teaching because I have got it from a source I do not generally acknowledge as authoritative, nor to reply that it is fiction. What I refer to is not fiction, it is what has been lived, and may be lived. It is moral, and not imaginative, in its origin. It does not come (as I think) from a healthy or perfect moral nature, but from a noble one nevertheless. It reminds one of the Prometheus Vinctus; an enduring, age-long suffering, unquenchable spirit, beset and bound by vast powers, Strength and Force; and accompanied by a wailing chorus who alternately cheer and depress it; with the vulture eternally gnawing, and the chain eternally galling it: never complaining, never undignified, and ever seeing beyond the present suffering the scintillations of distant sunrises, and hearing the music of invisible plumes "winnowing the crimson dawn," or the silver spikes of the aurora lace the hemisphere with crackling whispers.

As to *Wuthering Heights* I can't find in my heart to criticise the book. If I were walking with you over those empurpled fells for an autumn day, startling the moor sheep and the lapwing with passionate talk, I could not criticise what I said or what you said. It would become sacred. The remembrance of it would make my heart swell and the tears come to my eyes in the midst of the stern, hard life of the city. And yet, if I could see it to be a duty, I should greatly enjoy shutting myself up in a lone farmhouse for three days in the winter to write a criticism on

it. It is a wild, wailing, moorland wind, full of that unutterable love and anguish and mystery and passion which form the substratum of high natures. Turner has a landscape which is *it*. It *is* those wild hills, and a storm is *wuthering* over them, and the molten lightning is licking the heather, and nobody knows it but the one solitary soul, which he has not put there, who is watching it from a window in the waste.

But there is a very solemn and peaceful perception of a truth most powerful just now to my mind, even while I am giving inwardly a full unrestrained tribute of sympathy and admiration to it, and the mind that conceived it, viz. that the real, eternal, the true, the abiding, does not lie in these grandeurs and swelling emotions, and entrancing passions in any measure. They are, indeed, noble lineaments of our nature, but that by which we *live* is different.

Heathcliff is quite impossible, and therefore, so far, feeble. He is no bogie to me at all. Catherine is far more fearful, because quite possible. Heathcliff is an impalpable nightmare, and I put him beside the man who followed me in a dream with a loaded horse pistol, among the rafters of Lincoln Cathedral, holding a dark lantern.

A few months after he wrote on the same theme the following:—

If a traveller, passing in a "dark summer dawn" over a lofty mountain track, across moorlands very wide and waste, were to see, as the amber of the east

revealed the world to him, a strange-looking image at a distance among the heather, dark against the purple horizon and the yellow daybreak, "in a bed of daffodil sky," and, coming near to it, were to discern unmistakable evidence that a huge granite rock had been carved into the rude images of two human beings:—if, wondering, he were to examine its base and find that neither by name nor by style could he tell whether it had been carved two or ten centuries ago; to his eye it would seem as if Michael Angelo, striding in his sleep across the wild, had been trying to realise a human nightmare which would not let him rest in his bed; and yet, though there is the colossal aim, there is not the science of Angelo. Two human forms are locked in an embrace strong and stern as death. The woman strains her arms round the man, but the man—or, as he looks, is it the fiend?—flings one arm and one clenched hand outwards and upwards, as if in imprecation. The faces gaze at each other with portentous passion. The features—as he strives to study them he sees that there are no features but lichen and moss and obscure trenches of gray, storm-battered stone—glimmer into expression only while he is not searching them. He doubts whether it is an unheard-of freak of nature; and yet there is design, and unity, and simplicity, and meaning, and unutterable passion, with pathos which rends the heart. "Who did it? and when? and why? and what does it mean? and why have I not heard of it before?" he asks.

The shapeless base springs out of ruddy clustering heath; a wild rose or two has found its way there; the bleat of a yearling lamb cries out of the deep bloom of the heather. Overhead a lapwing gleams and wails. Dew lies and sparkles all about. He cannot tear himself away; he dare not stay, for he begins to think curious thoughts better for him not to indulge; and coming some days after into the town, his friends think him silent and "queer"; and in answer to his story about the granite figures, they look silently at one another; and as he cannot tell the whereabout, and no one has ever heard of them before or since, they conclude that he only set out on his pedestrian tour after the strain of publishing his last volume—just in time.

The place, though, where he saw them was *Wuthering Heights*, and the granite figures were Heathcliff and his lover Catherine.

The above rhapsody is my "impression" of Ellis Bell's work, and I think I feel it to be great. But whether it comes from my own or another mind, such a mode of using the grand and glorious faculties of the mind demands continual protest; and I feel, as I grow older, and, I trust, wiser, more disposed to denounce and renounce all such action of the intellect and heart. At twenty, I should have gloried in it; at thirty-five I as heartily despise it, both in myself and others.

I HAVE bought the third volume of *Modern Painters*,

and mean to read it with the slowness, iteration, and thought which it deserves. I have glanced at the chapter on "Finish," and I see the exquisite definition of it: "added fact." How clear, how true! Finish, from first to last—added fact. How this leads to the great principle, *study nature*.

I do not altogether care that in Art he should be absolutely consistent. It is a thing in which mood and feeling are concerned, and a man may speak in various ways, according to his moods. A man who does not would be likely to say cold and unmoving things about Art. If we have the verdant tropical zones of mountain, the sharp stony precipices and pearly snows of the Andes, with the dark large blue waves lapping their base, and can see them for our own delight through a golden haze, let us not care if now and then a smoking cone thunders and spits volcanic fire. Just before I began this letter Ruskin drove away from our door. He fulfilled his long-spoken intention, and brought my books. I showed him what I had to show. A quiet, kind conversation of half-an-hour, perhaps; encouraging on the whole, and showing a pleasant interest in what I am about.

1856.

It is the Truth that *lives*. This evening, going round the fields and lanes, on my old steps of thirteen years ago — the same gray twilight, sharp air, and pensive gold purple sunset over Highgate—my heart glowed within me as I thought how my life has

changed by the belief of a few simple things since those old days. I thanked God aloud. I sent some plain expressions of praise upwards to the heavens, where I saw one white star in the gray, tender blue, eastward; such expressions as I could scarcely repeat, so unlike me to say aloud were they; but I could not help it. My heart was glowing silently like that star in the heavens. A star is ever the same. All that we know of it was known by the shepherds of the East—by us as children—but it is for ever *there*. The leaves are tossing on the grass, or perishing in the pool, but the star is simple and the same. The leaf is not so simple to us as the star, it is not so grand, it is not so ineffable.

I find the *Truth* to be like that; I know no more intellectually of it than when I first believed; but what a result comes from its abiding! A deeper, deeper happiness absorbs the heart and pervades the soul. A deepening calm rules and assimilates the faculties, and compels them into action; not excitement, but definite and proper action.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, which baffles analysis, which has an infinitude of depth about it. As you cannot understand remote stars, nor the overhanging vault which you cannot at all explore, but can only feel as you feel your life, so you cannot touch this Peace of God with your understanding. It lies round you like an atmosphere. It dwells in you like a fragrance. It goes from you like a subtle elixir vitæ. "My peace I leave with you,

My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you."

May God double to you His peace.

To W. D.

1858.

Don't get into the focus of Criticism. Many men spoil their enjoyment of Art by looking on it as something to pull in pieces, rather than something to enjoy and lead them to enjoy nature, and through nature to enjoy God. How wretched is that feverish, satiated, complaining spirit of criticism. Never contented, never at rest. "Is this better than that, these than those? Is this a great man, and if great, *how* great? Is he as great as Rossetti, or as great as Raphael? or is he little, like Brown, Jones, and Robinson?" all the while avoiding *The Thing* and its relish: not thinking art, but about art; not conversing with nature, but with names. When they talk of their Raphaels, Correggios, and stuff, continue to shift your trumpet and only take snuff, and ask them with some earnestness if the Atlantic cable is likely to work again. I wish you were near enough to go with me to see the Sheepshanks Gallery and Turner's sketches at Marlboro' House. These last are very interesting and profitable. They confirm what I have long believed to be true, that in preparing for painting the best way is not to paint finished things from Nature, but to make slight, often symbolic records, in abundance of *facts*. There is scarcely an instance of

a finished sketch of effect directly from nature in all Turner. Careful outlines, however, of places, with true position of everything marked down zealously and minutely: and generally very modest, almost timid, in touch. I like the reverence this betrays. Some are slight, others hasty, for want of time; but all are full of tender, reverential feeling. The leaves from his sketch books reveal to me how he lived pencil in hand—every variation of coast-line; every heave of the vessels he saw, as long as he could see them; every pulley, and block, and tackling; every utensil and costume; every fact of growth, time, place, and size. To me this spirit is wonderfully fascinating.

Sept. 19.—Another week of work gone, and this letter *not* gone. Never mind, old boy.

> Some think this life is pleasant;
> Some think it speedeth fast;
> In Time there is no present;
> In Eternity no future;
> In Eternity no past:

and a week more or less is nothing.

Still it is good to get more life *outside* of you. Of all lives a painter's is perhaps most complete in this respect; deliciously complete. Monday's face, Tuesday's hand, Wednesday's foot, Thursday's flowers and foliage, Friday's drapery, Saturday's flying touches—all there just as you thought them, counting for you the fled moments of the past, and destined to live in hours and moments when *you* have fled

beyond all moments into the unembarrassed calm of Eternity.

Where Day and Night divide God's works no more.

Paul Veronese, three hundred years ago, painted that bright Alexander, with his handsome, flushed Venetian face, and that glowing uniform of the Venetian general which he wears; and before him, on their knees, he set those golden ladies, who are pleading in pink and violet; and there is he, and there are they in our National Gallery: he, flushed and handsome, they, golden and suppliant as ever. It takes an oldish man to remember the comet of 1811. Who remembers Paul Veronese, nine generations since? But not a tint of his thoughts is unfixed, they beam along the walls as fresh as ever.

Saint Nicholas stoops to the Angelic Coronation, and the solemn fiddling of the Marriage at Cana is heard along the silent galleries of the Louvre. ("Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter")—yes, and will be so when you and I have cleaned our last palette, and "in the darkness over us, the four-handed mole shall scrape."

To W. D.

Reading Voltaire's *Histoire de Charles XII.* Profited by it. He was an imitator of Alexander, but without his debaucheries; a man of one idea, firm, unflinching, having taken account of life and death and put aside the fear of death, so being prepared

for anything; sitting on horseback with a broken toe till his boot let blood out through the leather, without betraying any signs of emotion; fighting the battle of Pultowa in a litter, and only hoping for a glorious grave; undistracted, undivided, and believing in the glory of his destiny; pushing his men through forest, flood, and frost, through marsh and iceberg, while they fell round him by thousands gnawed away by the hungry North; swimming black and turbulent rivers, and climbing their precipitous snowbanks only to fight unlooked-for Cossack hordes in the white wilderness, out of hearing of friends and home; swallowing mouldy crusts in front of his army, from which his men turned with loathing; and reassuring them by his cheerful "*Il n'est pas bon, mais il peut se manger.*" (By the way, it is not good taste to put French into *his* mouth, for he, though he knew it, would never speak it, and hated everybody that did.) This is the sort of man to accomplish. The defects of such men are very patent, but they do not lie in their indomitableness nor in their perseverance. Why should not these qualities exist along with faith and peace and humility?

Bishop Usher used to say to a friend before parting, "One word for Christ." It is Saturday evening, and I do not like to go to bed without something more serious than has been yet put in my letter. Any person, acquainted at all with Christ, ought to be ready to speak of Him whenever he has leisure for anything else. At first one's conceptions of Him are

abstract to a great extent; they ought to become more and more concrete. To find ourselves any nearer the belief that we *have* an High Priest, once a man, now passed into the heavens, and whom the heavens will contain till the restitution of all things, ought to be a glad thought. We feel His workings, His efficacies. I thought to-day, when I was weary, of His saying, "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in me ye shall have peace." We feel it. Say not in thine heart, "Who shall ascend into heaven, that is, to bring Christ down from above. Behold, the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart." This to me has always been a marvellous explication of the mystery of faith—the incarnate *Word*, the truth, the life, the syllable, and the essence.

> Whate'er we hope, by faith we have
> Future and past subsisting now.

But as experience advances we ought to get nearer to the realisation of "Whom, not having seen, we love; and in whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Should we not be able to speak of Him, and feel towards Him something as certainly as of a living friend whom we knew to be in the next room?

To J. F. H.

10*th March* 1860.

I SUPPOSE I ought to wish with you to go to Rome and Venice, and that it is the duty of painters to go

when they can seems pretty clear. But, really, I feel so very happy among our English hedgerows, and find such inexhaustible and transcendent delight in the English flowers, and birds, and trees, and hills, and brooks, and, above all, in the wondrous sweet English faces and charming English ways, that nothing but a sense of duty will ever drive me to Rome and Venice. My difficulty is to appreciate our little back garden—our copper beech, our weeping ash (a labyrinth of dropping lines in winter, a waving green tent for my babies in summer), our little nailed-up rose trees and twisting yellow creepers, whose names I have been told a hundred times, but shall never get off by heart. The Vale of Hornsey seems a vast "foreign parts" to me—a happy valley, into which I get a glimpse once in six weeks or so—a valley of wonders.

To W. D.

11*th May* 1860.

THERE is an unspeakable repose in being independent enough to keep quiet. Great wealth is loud and noisy. But poverty is noisy also.

It certainly takes the shine out of work to feel that you are dependent on the small amount of real taste and knowledge there is at the command of a painter in private life. The feeling of "proud wrath," which characterises the proud and haughty scorner of the Book of Proverbs, is a besetment of any one who feels he *can* do what people won't believe he can do, or won't let him do, for them.

I am in hope that my efforts to get illustration work last autumn were not fruitless. I have a fifty-guinea commission, on which I am at work, to illustrate a book on Mexico by E. B. Tylor. Little picturesque vignettes on wood, just the thing for enjoyment; and I mean to push this branch of trade till I get enough work to give fortification to our resources. Let "High Art" go to Hanover (where I daresay it would meet with every encouragement), but let me and my beloved wife and children be free from imminent uncertainty as to the honest things of this life. Let our fireside have no spreading shadows that hard work in humble ways could dissipate. The hand of labour and the honest shilling for J. S.

But really you don't know what an essential difference these little changes (*i.e.* wood drawing and etching) have made in our experience, even in the mode of thought—the power to follow out a quiet, unruffled train of sweet thoughts or fancies—what a change it has made! I am reaping the fruits of long and arid toils which were made in hope of this haven. I have begun to recur with zest and still renewal to what you christened my knowledge books. They are just what they ought to have been, and I feel that for the rest of my days "my resting is my work, my working is my rest." For though I am infinitely ignorant I have learnt to be content. Though I know little yet, for my pursuit of painting I have broken up the fallows, and have found treasure in the deep-delved earth. I have found the Art of Finding how to get

thought out of books, out of men, out of things. I have learned the art of Appreciation. I am nearer to my kind. And I have learned—blessed knowledge!—the philosophy of Life, as it respects me and mine. Eureka! I have found Him of whom Moses and the prophets did write. I have found how He comes to man's soul, how He dwells, rules, guides, consoles, how He suffices. I have found the Way, the Truth, the Life.

Fourteen years ago I prayed earnestly that He would be my sole teacher, and show me the Way of Life—that He would be the centre of all my studies, all my motions; and this balmy Saturday evening I review the past, as Jacob did his fourteen years of servitude. With my staff I crossed this Jordan; now I am become two hands. Wonderful guidance! Blest Angel of the Covenant, who has redeemed me from all evil!

> More things are wrought by prayer
> Than this world dreams of.

14th June 1860.

If you stop your diligence in writing to me because you are afraid of being too personal, learn that you labour under a mistake. I never did let this stop me in writing to you, and (though I have, I trust, got past certain phases of insidiousness) I never mean it to stop me. It may not be good in books written for the world to crowd in too much of the Ego, but I have thought out the subject of private friendship, and I

learn that one of its sweetest essences is the mutual and unforbidden outpouring of the perilous stuff which "haunts the worn heart and will not let it rest":—duets in the Psalm of Life. One nightingale warbles in the moon-lighted dell—as Keats heard it warble—sad, and long, and solemn, and penetrating, like Ariel crying to the winds out of the compression of the pine tree; and, when the song is ended for the time, a distant trill comes from a deeper grove. "And I also—also—also——" it begins, and light echoing music-billows tumble against the silver crags, trickling away in the gurgle of a hidden stream.

Of his mode of letter-writing he says:—

THIS way of "thinking aloud" is the only one in which I can ever get along with *friends*, and I don't want and won't have friends with whom I can't do it. I have found within the last few years that it is a "kill or cure" method. Some folks won't stand it. They have themselves acquired the art of being careful and measured, and think it highly derogatory to a person's dignity to play the schoolboy, and swear and vow and commit yourself to the mercy of other people. They don't tell you much about the working of their own heart and life, but ask you if you have read *Silas Marner*, and enter on a short criticism of it, not half as good as you could read in a review, when you ought to get a living letter from a living friend. They will talk generals, when you want particulars—about others, when you want to know

about themselves. These people are excellent people often. They are respectable people, people to be respected. You always do respect them; you respect them when you see them flirt off two specks of dust from their waistcoat and see what a "clean shave" they got in the morning, and how difficult it is to get an impromptu opinion out of them, and how their whole life seems one endeavour not to *commit* themselves.

Well, as I was a-saying, this way of thinking aloud is a kill or cure with *them*, and I have been quietly dropped by a few of them, here and there, for thinking aloud—

> My manners have not that repose
> That stamps the caste of Vere de Vere.

But I beg to go on thinking aloud though they have gone out of earshot, and to remark that the caste of Vere de Vere is very welcome to its repose, and then when I find out by this patent method (of thinking aloud) that they are the caste of Vere de Vere, it is a great pleasure to leave them to their repose. They shall sleep a hundred years, like the princess in the nursery tale, in the sweet silence which is not broken by the thin bugle of a gnat, and Mr. Spouter will not be the fairy prince to awake them.

The ideal of a letter is that it should do on paper just what you do after the little party is over, when you poke the fire and spread the screen and mix the ——— I was going to say "toddy," but that has

such a bad sound; let us say the sugar and water. No, we won't say sugar and water, because there must be the sly cigar unbeknown to the caste of Vere de Vere, and no mortal Englishman could smoke with *eau sucrée*. What we will do is to give an intelligent wink and pass on.

"When you mix the"—(wink here)—and get into one of those moods that don't come every day, the mood so well described in Longfellow's "Fire of Driftwood," which you are to get down and read this very minute before you go any further. When you open your heart without fear of being misunderstood, when you talk of *your*self and listen with more eagerness for a corresponding voice from *them*selves—and when, without swearing one another to secrecy, you feel that the penates of the heart have been passing to and fro between their secret chambers, as the angels passed and repassed on the ladder of Jacob, each with a soft forefinger on his lip; and that these mystic rites of friendship are most sacred, never to be fully revealed except for some occasion of benefit or service:—is not that the right notion of a letter, as distinguished, I mean, from an order (for "a ton of your best coals") or a criticism ("By the way, have you read the Essays and Reviews, etc.," and "I fear the late Civil War in America is likely to prove bloody work, etc.")? Starting from this conception, letters become one of the prime blessings of life.

But how few such correspondents!

To Mrs. STEWARD.

20*th October* 1860.

I INTENDED long before this to have written to you again, but have been driven with business—a new class of complaint with me. I am very glad I gave you a picture, as it turned up, of the opposite state of things, when I was buffeting with the waves.

Indeed I think it is a good thing when any one will speak out what is befalling him, not in mystic hints but in plain English. Then both he and his friends will ultimately see "the Lord's dealing" (dear old phrase), for He works through all; and for Him, and to Him, and through Him are all things, to whom be glory for ever. Oftentimes it will be seen how He delivers and guides. The 107th Psalm will be found justified, and they will understand the loving-kindness of the Lord. Whereas, when you only get hints from which you cannot tell to a shade whether the deponent has had the toothache, or a house on fire, or has lost his silver spoons, you can neither fully sympathise with him, nor learn much from him.

Did you ever read Isaac Taylor's *Saturday Evening*? In 1842 B. Gregory introduced it to me. What it was all about I have forgotten, but not the deep tranquil impression made by it—

> Light
> Which broods above the sunken sun,
> And dwells in heaven half the night.

Still and vast with a plenitude—(Baby gives a grunt and a kick in the cradle just as I was coming

to something real stunning, and I have to stop and rock, being all alone with him)—with a plenitude of —of—amber light softening upwards towards the purple night, star-strewn "through all the silent spaces of the worlds," and enthroned on Helvellyn, with a brow marble cold and marble calm — "the Cherub Contemplation" — considering — considering life and death and change and immortality—considering these things, not purblind, but with clear eyes faithful to the truth, and seeing by the light of the Gospel.

Well, that was Isaac Taylor's Saturday evening, and this is mine; and for many years every Saturday evening I have felt just like that, "In the beginning of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week."

"My dawning is begun," like the Jews' dawning, the evening before.

So that if Mr. Chitty, the gardener, didn't come in to talk away an hour why woman was made from a rib in preference to any other bone; if I hadn't promised Mr. Shaw his etching, and to call on brother Paul (not of Tarsus, but of Spenser Road, Albert Town); if I had not to post accounts in re-etchingibus, or ideas in my big parchment book to keep them for use, if all and several such hindrances did not strew all the way, there is no knowing what long letters I should get written to all my dear friends, you among the number; for then the sense of benignity and regard, outgoing and unrestrained, is always very

strong upon me, lying like deep waters—a tidal sway of affection—"of pure ablution round earth's human shores"; and it is one of the most delicious feelings on earth. As Saturday evening is to the coming Sabbath, so is this feeling to the coming heaven.

I have had some kind letters from Ruskin, one giving me leave to print anywhere or anyhow any opinion he may have expressed about my work in private letters, in bits, or wholes, or how I like, and concluding by a very characteristic sentence: "I never wrote a private letter to any human being which I would not let a bill-sticker chalk up six feet high on Hyde Park wall, and stand myself in Piccadilly and say 'I said it.'" Isn't that "spirity," but is it not also very grand? I wish I could say as much. He says he is "proud to class me among his best friends."

To W. D.

I HAVE been thinking lately of the set-offs against a painter's difficulties, which are greater to him because of his structure—

> Cords that vibrate sweetest pleasure
> Thrill the deepest notes of woe.

1. He is less than many dependent on money for happiness and supply; "His mind to him a kingdom is," and if he can pay his way, and his wife and children not want the *ordinary* comforts of life, money can do next to nothing for him. He would rather walk than ride, rather dine plainly than

delicately, dress plainly than finely. A few books are all he wants. A sixpenny sketch-book and a lead pencil set him up at once, and in a new colour-box he sees the wealth of Ormus concealed. He "makes the heaven he cannot find." His belongings are not too narrow; they are too vast for him. Park Lane and the peep into the New River give the combinations of Paradise (Row),[1] etc. etc.

2. Nobody expects him to be rich. Some even think it a degradation if he care for money at all. All good society concedes him an upper seat at the board, which a large fortune does not open to the mere man of money. So that, in fact, solvency is to him equal to two thousand a year.

The following notes may be interesting on the works of painters, then comparatively little known to the public. "Edward Jones" is Mr. Burne Jones.

24*th March* 1860.

A LETTER from Rossetti. He is coming to see us before long. He has some fine things at the Hogarth Club, to which he gave me a ticket. There is a man there, Edward Jones, whose work you would like amazingly. There is a tall cabinet, seven feet high, designed and painted by him from Chaucer, the legend of the little boy whom the Jews murdered, but who would go on singing "Alma redemptoris, evermore," till some saint, or somebody, put a grain

[1] Paradise Row adjoins Park Lane at Stoke Newington, where he was then living.

of wheat on his tongue. It might have been done by Giotto, only Giotto could not have done it near so well. Rossetti has Dante and Beatrice in Paradise; a glorious thing. The sky is gilt, the name is put on scrolls ('*Hortus Eden*') in the sky, and the names are written near the heads. The background is a rich rose hedge, with birds of Paradise pecking roses, and nestling, and singing birds singing lustily. There is a floor of tall buttercups, hyacinths, and lilies, among which the five figures are treading ankle deep. Coloured calm, "above all pain, all passion, and all pride," reigns in the atmosphere. There they walk in knowledge, love, and beauty evermore.

To W. D.

May 1860.

As to the Academy, I have not much to say. The picture that fascinates me most is "Pegwell Bay" by Dyce. It is great and solemn in its truth and simplicity. There is also a classic dream of Danby's, a sea of emerald and silver, with silver morning, and blue Apollo and his horses, and Venus born from the foam, and a blue mountain altar with its smoke from fire kindled, whether by mariner or shepherd who knows or wants to know as it wreathes upward among the radiant cirri that seem to have leaped from the anvil of the East in silver sparks over the silver sea—such seas as are seen from "magic casements" "in faery lands forlorn"—such seas as roll in reverie on coral rocks, when we have forgotten

that men eat one another, and only think that nymphs and tritons lie among the shells on the glistening sands. Ah! it is good to have seen Danby's waves roll in on that light and lovely shore.

To W. D.

HYTHE, *9th July* 1860.

I WISH you were down here with us. Just six years ago on our wedding trip we were at Eastbourne with the Boltons and their four children, now we are here. We are spread into bands. We have taken a house and the cook thereunto belonging (for Bolton likes his servants to enjoy the seaside as much as they do), so we have plenty of fun with the children and no trouble. So you see we are as nicely fixed as we could desire; only if you were with us we should be fixed nicer-er.

Since I came down I have been trying to find something in the way of worry to overcome by "consideration," but I declare I can't; and so I am obliged to confess the fact. We cannot reasonably be uneasy about money matters now; and as we are all in health and at peace, it would be wrong not to be very thankful and content. And yet in the multitude of my thoughts within me it has been "borne in on my mind" that one may give an aspect of too self-sufficient contentment to one's historic life. There are so few who are at peace, who are satisfied, who are truly happy, that it is grating to their feelings to inform them that you have no sorrow or

trouble to share with them, that you have become independent of sympathy ; that your mountain stands strong. I have had this thought even in regard to spiritual peace and rest. It seems little comfort to others to tell them of your joy, while perhaps they are yearning and striving after repose which does not come. It often comes back on one's mind as if it were selfish. But I have thought this last difficulty pretty well out, and conclude that as such peace is not the product of skill, or labour, or thought, but a divine gift, free for all who seek it in the right way, it would be wrong not to announce it.

It is of no use for Maurice and the like to taunt (as it appears to me he does in his refined and powerful style) those who affect to attain personal fellowship and adoption into the family of God, as if it were a narrow and presumptuous claim of special goodness and special favour. I reply in my own heart that the objection is not only unfair, but positively childish. I think that as the well-being of a nation is the aggregate of individual weal—of family welfare —so the happy church (in which he would, seemingly, have all believers, somehow, I cannot see how, lose their identity) is the host of happy souls—of pure souls. And I think the more intensely each member of that church realises his own relation to God, the more expansiveness will his religion have.

Yesterday went a walk with Bolton's young ones ; took sketch-book ; drew flowers by the way.

There are two ways of sketching. One is pic-

turesque sketching, which gets pretty *effects*; the other is knowledge sketching, which draws *things* with their constructive elements—the petals, the calyx, the stem, the leaf, which thus recognises classification and knows what is what. I don't mean botany, for I have not got to that yet, but that kind of order which links one summer to another and makes you remember the yellow-horned poppy of six years ago, and makes you see that English-flower elements are not endless so far as they concern the poetic charm of your English country walks. It is the "wild briar and the vine and the twisted eglantine"; it is the cowslip and the daisy and the buttercup and the clover and the wild geranium, and the one o'clock that you puff away with your breath; it is the dog-rose and the feathery grasses—things that dwell everywhere, have a recognised prominence and predominance; it is these that subdue you and haunt you, and not the things that you put in a hortus siccus and label with names that you would hate to learn if the knowledge of them didn't make you seem *somebody*.

If you are out on a serious working expedition take the picturesque mode of working, and make pretty landscapes. But if you are idling for health, do these fragments that will breathe out of your note-books in winter-tide, and bring back the lanes and fields to you when you are far from them.

I am reading Bulwer's *Harold*. One of the best ballads of the sort I ever read is one towards the

beginning of the book about "Rollo the Norman," sung by Taillefer at a feast.

Your theory of poetry-making is a good one. It is singular that only a few days before your description came I was thinking that if ever I was taken poetical again I would write it in prose first, but as to the rest I rarely alter anything. Having got the substance and sentiment before me, I can't put down a word till I have got the right one—as far as I can grasp the right one. So it is very slow work. So usually, when written I can't mend it, because I have done my *best*.

What a strange demand is that which an idea makes now and then, which won't let you rest till you have written it in poetry!

Have you seen Mrs. Browning's poem in *Cornhill Magazine* for July, with Leighton's very fine drawing of Pan? It is as fine as if Keats had drawn it.

KINGSLEY says he gave up his Professorship of History at Oxford because he could only make out history to be one long tissue of lies. *That* at least is a credible fact. Yet we *must* amuse our imaginations, and if we keep believing the opposite of an historical fact we shall keep near enough to the truth for all practical purposes. "In much wisdom is much grief, and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." Nay, there is nothing like living beings and the thing that *is*. "A living dog is better than a dead lion." N. Hawthorne said,

when he saw the British Museum Library, "Let us burn them all and begin again." How to hit the truth between these two moods, the book mood and the life-mood is the question.

To J. F. H.

25th September 1860.

SPENT the morning with Rossetti. His "Marriage of St. George" is one of the grandest things, like a golden, dim dream. Love "credulous all gold," gold armour, a sense of secret enclosure in "palace chambers far apart"; but quaint chambers in quaint palaces where angels creep in through sliding panel doors, and stand behind rows of flowers, drumming on golden bells, with wings crimson and green.

There was also a queer remnant of a dragon's head which he had brought up in a box (for supper possibly) with its long, red, arrowy tongue lolling out so comically, and the glazed eye which somehow seemed to wink at the spectator, as much as to say, "Do you believe in St. George and the Dragon? If you do, I don't. But do you think we mean *nothing*, the man in gold and I? Either way I pity you my friend."

Did I tell you that Ruskin has given me a commission to etch from Titian's "Bacchus and Ariadne," a large Bacchante's Head, at my leisure?

A letter to Rossetti on the same subject as the above may be given here, though not in the order of date—

To D. G. R.

8th December 1865.

YOUR Saint Georges and Sir Galahads are almost the only modern pictures of heroes that reach the Christian ideal, in my judgment, as to expression. Not to be invidious in naming artists, the modern knight is a proud, vain, truculent rascal. Yours are "renewed in the spirit of their minds"—couldn't do a mean or wrong thing—fear nothing and nobody, but would not hurt a fly or strike an unnecessary blow. So I greatly esteem and respect them.

And falling in with modern life and thought one can well look on the George and Dragon idea as a good allegory of the war of Christianity against that old dragon the devil, and not exclude even a certain grotesque element. For though often Satan dismays the individual Christian, Christianity is so sure of the rout, seizure, and destruction of the dragon that (as in Luther, and many men with wit and fancy as well as piety) the war is conducted with a sort of mockery in the assured expectation of victory. Christianity is not in the least ashamed of its rams' horns, and lamps and pitchers, and all that abases the pride of man and exalts the power of God. So Georges and Dragons are charming in their place and way.

To W. D.

7th January 1861 (5.40 P.M.)

BEEN down to the end of Church Street to get a blow before settling for the evening. A sublime sort

of evening—windy, vast, with wild clouds and great spreads of mournful light where the sun had been, clearing away for a while into a starry purple dome, with the Pleiades and Orion and the Great Bear and the Galaxy, a sight that makes man feel his immortality and his littleness more than perhaps any other. As I went Mr. Clissold's house in the dark park had a curious gleam on it, a phosphoric light from the west that made one think of ghosts, and across the pale amber two or three dark, almost black, little clouds drove slanting-like collapsing balloons. Against this western screen the trees showed their leafless fringes, and a bend of the New River lay gloomy and blue beneath them.

Winds were blowing, waters flowing,
We heard the steeds to battle going,
Oriana,
And the hollow bugle blowing,
Oriana.

To Mrs. Taylor he writes :—

Many best wishes to you at the beginning of 1861. I hope it may be the happiest year of your life, as I think each succeeding year of everybody's life should be, if only everybody were wise enough to see things as they are ; for it is certain that there really exists, laid up and ready to hand, for those who will just lay hands upon it, enough for every one and enough for ever.

I am quite sure that the central mistake of all lives that *are* mistaken is the not taking this simple

unchangeable fact for granted, not seeing that it is so, and cannot but be so, and will remain so "though we believe not." A man in prison, with a signed and sealed permission to leave it and walk at liberty lying on the table beside him, untouched, unopened, yet bemoaning himself and unhappy in his cell, is just the image of us unbelievers who have even a fragment of unhappiness about us. I think I can trace every scrap of sorrow in my own life to this simple unbelief. How could I be anything but quite happy if I believed always that all the past is forgiven and all the present furnished with power, and all the future bright with hope, because of the same abiding facts, which don't change with my mood, do not crumble, because I totter and stagger at the promise through unbelief, but stand firm and clear with their peaks of pearl cleaving the air of Eternity, and the bases of their hills rooted unfathomably in the Rock of God?

Mont Blanc does not become a phantom or a mist because a climber grows dizzy on its sides, and yet we make mistakes just as great as if we fancied, being climbers, that it did.

To W. D.

(Saturday night). 30*th March* 1861.

Been a walk along the Lower Road, Islington, among the grocers' shops. Man, getting bald, looking so respectable among his cannisters that I stood and stared at him. He thought I was admiring his shop and should become a customer; deluded man!

Watched a man with two candles wrapped in brown paper to give a better light—very ingenious—with an old tea-tray for a table, making toasting forks. Honest nice man, liked that man; scrubby looking, but honoured him. I honoured him more than the respectable grocer, though I have no doubt *he* is a nice man, and have a great respect for him, and his coffee smelt very fragrant; and if I had not money enough to be a grocer I would make toasting forks. Do you think I feel myself above that? Then you are mistaken. I know that either you or I, if need be, could wrap our two candles in brown paper, trudge out with our old dirty tea-tray with all the paint gone off long since, set the two candles aflaring, and begin to twist toasting forks in the sight of the public; and then when our fingers ached, hold up the forks, big and little, and with a contented, quiet, experienced, husky voice, say, "One penny; large fork only twopence; tobacco stopper, one penny." Only take care to wrap up well, for the sake of our family and society; for neither the one nor the other could do without our toasting forks. I know another man who would do the same thing, and be extra cheerful over it: and that man is John Ruskin; and whether a man would do such a thing and not whine over it, if he were put to it, is one of the best ways of estimating a man.

I wish you had been with me. I know your heart so well in some directions, and am sure that it is filled often with the

> Sweet, sad music of humanity,
> Not harsh or grating, but of ample power
> To chasten and subdue.

There can be no more refreshing thing than such a walk after a hard day's home-work, especially at a peculiar class of pursuits. You are taken out of yourself by seeing how many kinds of work and styles of mind and ways of living there are in the world; and how honest, and hearty, and genial, and heroic, some old dirty, fudgy people are. I wish I could be certain that they were all going to heaven. Some of them are, and I thank God on their behalf. I have a world of such meditations about old rheumatic chaps that I have known long years ago, whom I have met in prayer-meetings, men "despised and rejected of men," and not noticed in the thoroughfares of life, but dear to God. It is a comfort to me to know that lots of them have gone to God. Two such old men have gone from our little society here at Stoke Newington. One sold a bit of tea, and had a little pension, and staggered along in June days with a tendency to hernia, and prayed as if he had a fortune of ten thousand a year, and were the man best off in the world, and arrayed like Solomon. The other sold brushes in a decent shop, and used to lead the singing in the prayer-meetings in a way to craze a sensitive person, and he prayed like a good old muff; but he was one of those who *lasted out*, a "Class Leader" 50 years; only think!

And now he is past all his sorrows and ignorance,

beyond your thought and mine. These old men, I notice, always die grandly. They don't talk much. They say, "I am willing to stay or willing to go, and I have peace with God," and that is about all you can get out of them. They dread their grave as little as their bed.

The following refers to his constant habit of drawing all he read; "Squaring," as he termed it. (See Memoir.)

THE comparison in judging of my books should never be between them and good art; but between them and nothing; for that is just it. When I consider that many of the facts and ideas that passed through my mind, say ten years ago, would by this time have vanished utterly, I do think it is better to have *lame ghosts* of them which *can* be brought to life than no memorial at all.

I stayed as well as I could in my rapid years-long camel ride through the desert, or by Elim when at rest, and I built my rude monuments, and often since then have I revisited what otherwise would have perished utterly; revisited them, pouring the oil of joy on the shapeless stone in which I saw my thought as Michael Angelo in his marble saw hidden the gigantic shapes of Night and Day, though to others they look even *now* like cairns in which rude fanciful resemblances to human life may be traced by ingenious eyes. So in a beetling coast-rock picnic parties are shown, as one of the sights, the enormous head of "the Old Duke," staring like Cortez stared at the Pacific.

Depend upon it, that in many of those old illuminated books, done by pious monks, ages ago, in retired abbeys standing silent among the corn-seas, there are wrought into the borders of the gospels and other books the whole life and soul and history of the men who did them; but tenderly veiled. I trust that under the fig leaves of the margin God saw many a Nathaniel at his orisons, and that where unopened eyes now only see idle wanderings of pure crimson, gold, and purple, there flowed rivers of thought that divided the plains of vellum, hiding in their "dimpling coves" the triumph or the hope, or the care, or the dark and twisted temptations to which I fear those too solitary souls, warm with humanity which no whips could tame or water drown or quench, were often exposed.

To me an illuminated book is a mystery, like the Microcosm. I am sure, by the mode of their inventions, by the subtlety of their imagery, by the sensitiveness to natural Fact and Being shown in their imitations, that they could not avoid finding out the fundamental principles of Monumentalism, and that more is meant than meets the eye. People wonder at their patience. Ah! they would not wonder if they knew how in a remote corner of a crowded page there may be trivial forms that ring out to the mental ear like huge golden bells in the eternal chime—to Jerome striving to rise from the mastery of all human passion into the thrice-purged heavenly passion of Christian love for Paulina, loosed from, or at least striving to shake off, all the "chains of sense." I *know* that

many of those pages were done in a bewitching dream, with eyes full of the dew of hopeless love. I know that those female faces—those angels in the borders—lived in castles within sight of abbeys in the vales. I know that the silent painter-monk saw the vision of the lady in the convent chapel. I know that though his lips moved in paternosters, and though his beads fell steadily through his fingers, that the power of beauty enthralled his eye and imagination, and that for days after he muttered in green and purple and gold to the Eternal Silence.

I WENT to Gilchrist's [1] on Saturday. Found him living next door to Carlyle, and to be an intimate friend of his. The day before he had gone with C. to hear Ruskin lecture at the Royal Institution. (Carlyle kept inquiring the time every ten minutes, and at last said, "I think he ought to give over now"). Ruskin is a favourite of his, or he would not have gone at all, for he hates art in reality; but R. sent him a ticket. Gilchrist and several others we heard of thought the lecture a failure; but C. would not add the weight of his opinion to this, whatever he might think. G. seems to be a nice fellow, and very fond of art.

1861.

I HAVE read several interesting books lately. Boswell's *Tour to the Hebrides* is one of the jolliest books that can be; like nothing so much as having been

[1] A. Gilchrist, the biographer of Etty and Blake.

there along with Dr. Johnson and him. I am enjoying Carlyle's *French Revolution* just now; a singular book, but very interesting, and so full of fancy and humour and reflection of the oddest kind that it is unlike any other history. It is all prelude so far; but the prelude is portentous, and he makes you feel it to be so: "Distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring." He presents through gaps, again and again, the image of the 25,000,000 of France, till it haunts you as the sea haunts you; and each time the swell and the trouble of it seems greater, and you cannot but feel that such a tempest as never brewed before is labouring up.

The wrong of centuries can not be revoked, and as you watch financier after financier build up his hopeless schemes, and see them rattle down, you can't help mocking with the rest.

The red clouds—"dragonish"—mount all round the horizon; and what can avert the crimson rain which will soon drive over land and sea? for, "There is sorrow on the sea, it cannot be quiet."—JEREMIAH.

I OFTEN impersonate the Heavenly Wisdom to myself as a pure and beautiful woman, fresh, and sweet, and soft, and radiant, and strong, who has a mystic embrace for those who will be enamoured of her. I find imagination to be a great help to religion. The Bible encourages me in this more than any book in the world; and often, when the accustomed *forms* of truth grow less attractive, or when

the pressure of moral responsibility becomes intense, the bright wand of the ideal transfigures in endless directions truth on truth. And so a strong refreshment comes to the soul by that very agency which in past years I have often been led to regard as an enemy.

To Mrs. HALL.

July 1861.

"To save a soul": I can't somehow realise the idea that *I* should ever be so honoured of God. To save my own soul, and wear through the long fight without losing my own crown, and without bringing disgrace on the cause of Christ, these have seemed the limit of my hope. I can go on working; I can sow a little; I can add my labour to the heap in hope that among other agencies I may help rather than retard the work of Christ. But to "save a soul," as the direct result of my own direct effort, has scarce ever entered into my contemplation. I shall be glad if both he that soweth and he that reapeth rejoice together. Though "a son in the gospel" must be a pleasant relationship.

[I transcribed the above this morning, 8th August 1889. This evening Mrs. S. called. She said, "I never had the pleasure of knowing Mr. Smetham, but I have heard so much of him since I came to Stoke Newington that I feel as if he were a personal friend. There is scarcely a social meeting held in Green Lanes but his name is mentioned. At a Love feast a few Sabbath evenings since, a gentleman said, 'I shall praise God to all eternity that I was ever led to Mr. Smetham's class, I owe all the good I have to his teaching and influence.'"—S. S.]

23rd Aug. 1861.

PAINTED three and a half hours in the morning at Caedmon. The sense of urgency would make me overwork myself, as Haydon used to do. I know it won't do. A few days' good work would be done, and then would come that ineffable disgust which would sap all strength out of mind and nerves, and make me hate the sight or thought of a picture. Five hours a day is as much as any but *iron* men can do safely; and yet artists are just the men to get roused to the utmost at times, by the sense of imperative action.

Religion helps me greatly here. The large views of the gospel, the high hopes, the deep consolations, enable me to master myself even when I should be carried away by what seems a praiseworthy stimulus. "Godliness is profitable for all things": profitable to direct.

24th Aug.

SUCH a sky! Such films and threads of infinite tenuity! Such flat roofs of cirri, lying high up in perspective, beyond the reach of science! Ruskin's "don't know," in the last volume about clouds, is very manly and noble after his "spouterism" in the first volume of *Modern Painters* on the same subject. There he spoke as if he had "entered into the Springs of the Sea"; "walked in search of the Depth"; "seen the treasures of the Snow, the treasures of the Hail," and "by which way the light is parted," and "the way for the lightning of

thunder," and knew whether the "rain had a father, and who had begotten the drops of dew and had numbered the clouds of heaven."

I love him more for the subdued, reverential, renunciatory tone of his last writings, which come not from less knowledge but more wisdom.

As the sun dropped, these long ranks which might have been the immeasurably distant *effect* of an army of "mailed angels on a battle day," all took a purple and scarlet fire; but I had to leave them before they acquired, what I was sure they would have before long, a sort of metallic lustre dark and flowing.

Sunday, 30*th Nov.* 1861.

THOROUGHLY enjoyed the Sabbath. The total and enforced change cleared my head of the finishing touches of my paragraphs in the Essay [1] which would follow me, as

> Bells say ding to bells that answer dong.
>
> ROSSETTI.

The night was cold and wild, and the fire looked so comfortable after chapel as I enjoyed my cigar and the sweet repose of thought till bedtime, full of thanksgiving for "all the way in which the Lord has led me."

Monday, 6.30.

MONUMENTALISING the historical introduction to Rossetti's *Early Italian Poets*, friends of Dante; de-

[1] This refers to his Article on Religious Art in England, published in the London *Quarterly Review*.

licious work. R.'s sketch is good strong common sense writing, without a touch of oddity or of extravagance, and very intelligent.

There is a beautiful clear sketch of the life of Guido Cavalcanti, evidently a great gun in Florence in the days of Dante, rich, learned, handsome, polite, disdainful, studious, solitary: a man whose society all coveted, and of whom all anecdotes were acceptable: one of the subjects of the Boccaccio's *Tales*. It is pleasant to see the dark lantern's level ray thrown on "The night of Time" to illuminate some solitary ghostly passenger who moves from the uncertain gloom on one hand to the impenetrable oblivion on the other, across a track of solid life which he has made for himself by a poem, or a picture, or a benevolent or brave deed.

To Mr. J. F. HALL on the death of Mr. Thos. Farmer of Gunnersbury.

1861.

I HEARD on Sunday evening from Dr. Osborn that your grandfather was gone. I had previously posted a scrap of letter to you, which, if you get it, I hope you will put by till some time when it will be more congenial.

The immediate presence of death makes outward things seem very small and unimportant, and the ordinary gossip of life tame and sapless. It is well that it does, for we often need to be carried nearer the borderland, and see how we hasten there ourselves. I am glad, however, that in *your* household

death will not come, as it does in too many, a dark surprise when its real presence is felt there. The certainty and importance of death is one of the elements in the problem of life to all believers. The way in which we look at it will be to each of us a good test of the whole of our mental and moral organisation and training. To many Christians, even, it comes very cheerlessly when it invades their homes. It is hard to judge of others, though, by this test, however serviceable it may be to ourselves. We must not suppose faith to be too low, or to be absent, where the reality of death presses heavily and gloomily at times. Even John Fletcher murmured now and then in his last hours, "The cold grave, the cold grave!" and very great and good people, with much forethought and outlooking into the future, feel deeply awed and humbled by the very remembrance of death. It is *of itself* so very obscure and mysterious. Life ceases so silently. The soul passes so utterly from the senses of the survivors, and in the unanswering pathetic decadence of "the remains" we feel so baffled. We have *no* power over those we loved most. They *will* slide away from us, and all our force of will and ingenuity is nothing to the calm, inexorable wasting of our friends and lovers and acquaintance into darkness. I have in one of my books a memorial sketch of Quintilian with his wife and three children all dead beside him. All his quiet philosophic studies, so sweet for years with the "placens uxor" and the dear children, are broken in upon by a mystic death

that he cannot dispute with, and cannot see; and he is lifting his hand impotently and declaring that a man could not be a man who did not curse those gods and that Fate who sit behind the scene of mortality and do all this to *him*.

Oh how precious does that intangible *faith* (as real though as invisible as death) become in the presence of death! What peace can there be in death, either to the dying, or the witnesses of it, but that which comes from the possession of faith? There may be Stoicism, but not Peace. "I know that he shall rise again." Do you indeed? *How* do you know it? You have seen death often; have you seen a resurrection? If you *know* that he shall rise again, you are a believer; for here there is no proof but *Faith*. How blessed is he that believes! Every portion of faith is precious, from the first dawning recognition of God to the "full assurance of faith." It is a comfortable thought that Christ dieth no more and that He will bring with Him those who sleep in Him; and how comfortable it ought to be to those who knew and loved your grandfather, that as he shared in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, so now he has taken his seat in Christ's rest. If we know this only by faith, yet we *do* know it; and this fact, carefully entertained and treasured, ought from this time to be constantly at work on our moral nature. The death of a good man is precious in ten thousand ways, precious to God, for He knows, as we cannot, what is in store when the probation is faithfully and safely

passed, and when the proved soul has entered through the gates into the City; but it is also most precious to those who remain. No one *can* be the same after the death of one very near to them; they will either be much better or much worse, and surely then, when the hand of God is stretched out to resume a soul, the ear of God is very near and very open, and His voice very clear in saying, "What can I do for *thee*?" He waits then for some very earnest response; and if ever men may ask for some good thing, if ever they are in the right temper for asking, it is then.

To J. F. H.

24th March 1862.

ROMNEY, the painter, a man far superior to Reynolds in native poetic power, was originally a cabinetmaker in Kendal, where he painted portraits with success, and married, and had two sons. He came to London, leaving them to be sent for when he had made his way. He achieved fame and fortune, and never sent for his wife for thirty-seven years! When he was old and helpless he returned to her, and she nursed him till he died. He was the friend of Cowper the poet, and of Flaxman the sculptor. I know how it was: "This country wife would ruin everything: how could I have her here and keep her bottled up? and how could I present her? Fancy Lady Hamilton having a talk with her! Fancy *me*, with these deep, classic, thronging conceptions, Titanic glimpses of nature and the passions, presenting a

'missus' who says, 'Yes mum' and 'No mum,' and calls me 'Our George!'" Here was a case where pride carried with it the shame of sense, and substituting one word for the other it suggests the line—

> The crime of sense became
> The crime of malice, and was equal blame.

I HAVE been to the Exhibition of the British Artists this afternoon. I can't say that I saw any *very* good work, though there were some decent pictures. The two best little things (by Provis) were actually stuck away in corners on the floor. I felt not disinclined to go to the man at the secretary's table (as he was a little one) and pull his ears, as the representative of the body. I could scarcely have believed such a piece of malevolent injustice without seeing it with my own eyes. I greatly dislike exhibitions—scarcely ever love painting less than when I am in them. They are, no doubt, necessary evils, for sales could not be effected very well without them; nor could the public, as such, get well acquainted with their country's art, but the incongruity of the swarms of ideas thrust on the eye at once, and the occasion they give to petty jealousy and passions, take half the charm from them. But it was not always so. How well do I remember in 1844 the first sight of Collins's pictures and others. I remember half wondering if I should *live* till the doors were open and I could get a fair sight. The picture I then saw of Collins's is now, I am thankful to say, in the South Kensington collection—the "Sea-

ford," with the cloud shadows chasing each other on the windy sands, and the lovely group of children in the foreground.

To F. J. S.

After a good day's work perambulated the neighbourhood till 9 P.M. How wonderful are the new streets! The whole business of such a walk is enough for two volumes of a *Middlemarch* tale. The mere effects are grand—the black field beyond the lamps with the mystic white old houses; the wild light and shade in gardens from varied lights; the steady stars as of old up above; the new shops—new ventures in the "grocery line," the "confectionery line," the fruiterer in a fair way of doing well; the solemn old men smoking in the dusk, come from no one knows where; young married folk setting up housekeeping on very little a year, yet with notions of being "above some folks." The interest is profound and endless. A slow walk in a neighbourhood both old and new—stopping, prowling, poking—is a wonderful thing.

To J. F. H.

21*st December* 1862.

It is a windy morning, and the grass is driven to the earth on the bank. These changes in the weather are influential over some folks' thoughts. That poem in "In Memoriam," about the rooks blown about the skies, and

> I scarce could bear the strain and stir
> That makes the barren branches loud;

is a valuable contribution to the natural history of sensitive people. The elements seem to make sport of the *surface* of thought, just as they do with grass and reeds and little pools, and brooks and garden plots.

I got your letter last night. I wish you would believe that the most trivial detail of your life is deeply interesting to me. I set you an example by giving you what is uppermost always; whether it be etching or painting, or visiting, or grumbling, or bad temper, or anything. This is the only way to keep on writing letters. If we have to escape from our present mood and engrossing thoughts in order to write a letter, writing becomes a pain and a difficulty. The personality of a letter is one of its commendations.

Life is indeed blessed. All the outward success in the world could not produce the feeling I had last night after a service led by Mr. C. Taylor. Such sweet and fresh emotions dwelt in me as I could not describe.

Beside that, when I sum up what God has given me *externally*, such friends, such associations, such safe retreats, such delicious pursuits in which I realise the flushing joy of art employed on all the highest topics of human thought, there seems enough indeed to fill me with unbounded joy and satisfaction. Blessed be God.

To Mrs. HALL.

9th September 1862.

It is my birthday, as I found on waking by Ally's

betraying the secret that a pair of worked slippers were under the bed, from Mama with an affectionate inscription. Presently Johnny turned up with a packet containing a pair of olive gloves (now perpetuated by the illustrious camera). This was an opportune present, for I had only one glove in the world, and that was an old one, its fellow being dropped on the Bradford Railway; and I was resolved not to spend money on another pair just yet, seeing that an honest man can go without, or make believe with one. I believe I have "took in" the public for at least eight weeks. The public has been living under the delusion that I have had a whole pair of gloves, whereas, by a dazzling series of manœuvres with one, they have lived in a hollow cheat. I shall now go on a different tack, making such a display as to convey somehow the impression that I have four hands instead of two (all with gloves on), and that I have a brand new pair on every morning. This will lead to the supposition that I must be very well off indeed; which will lead people to buy my pictures (it being well known that they only buy them of those who don't need to sell them); and so, by what may be well called a *coup de main*, I intend to become rich, prosperous, admired, sought after, and afterwards a statue erected to my memory, with a pair of gloves on, in the Italian style, where you can see the hands through, as in the veiled ladies, etc.

To Mrs. HALL.

18th January 1863.

I FEEL somewhat the effects of close work lately, in a sort of eagerness and solicitude. I grudge every moment not spent at the easel.

The work I have done ought, one would think, to be telling in outward ease of circumstances, and I hope *is* gradually telling, enough to justify me as to faithful labour in the eyes of all right-judging people. Yet it often is a strain upon me to feel that there is no proportion between labour and result.

To keep from murmuring, from rage, from despondency, from unmanly perplexity, is the thing I have to contend with—to *go on* peacefully, meekly, hoping against hope, and acquiescing in all these changing and complicated tests; not seeking relief by going to Egypt for help, or to that king Jareb, who is only a heathen scamp after all. To expect to be free from these or similar trials would be to wish the course of Christian life to be other than the Bible represents it to be. Why am I thus? Why, for more reasons than thou canst conceive of; for everything blessed and good, and perfect and permanent. Good even now; good, because strength is made perfect in weakness; good, because a true *man* rejoices to contend and endure, and does not look to ease and rest as the highest good.

To a Friend.

THERE is yet another thought I have for you:

"If thou seekest for her as for hid treasures, then shalt thou find the knowledge of God." I want you to take this view, that whereas hid treasures never sweat themselves to the surface on the rumour that a treasure-seeker is afoot after them, there is that strange element in the truth. Try to realise while you seek that as soon as your foot is turned to the fields of gold all heaven is astir to help you. Strange helps will come to you — hints, intuitions, breathings, curious allurements, as of singing birds flitting to show you the way. A divining-rod will put itself into your hand, and it will press and waver and draw and point, and though it may lead you into darker places than you like, and though you may even grow faint and fearful, yet if you don't draw back you will come into the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold, and to Paradise, where the streams divide themselves into four and water the whole earth.

To T. A.

27th March 1863.

Yesterday when I put up my canvas I found myself checkmated by that sense of mental nausea which results from having expended the delicate store of nervous power required for work. I could almost have cried, but remembered the patience of Job. I did not lose the day, but wrote hard in "ventilators" to drive off the blues. Yet the nature of the hindrance is the vexing part of it. I was well enough to have gone on with almost any other kind

of business. It is faint inodorous gases that are generated slowly and pour invisibly over the silver rims of the brain. It is fine bubbles that swim round the optic nerve and burst to meet the gas, and by their meeting create that *Vis vivida animi* without which painting is as futile as firing with a broken arm.

You have seen a lecturer on chemistry come to *the* experiment of the evening. You have noticed his neat manipulation and quiet self-collected voice. Yet as the preparation for the grand explosion, that is to prove a series of statements previously made, is going on, you see that something is wrong. The boy in buttons, who runs with glass balls and retorts; the assistant, with his hair parted in the middle; the maestro himself, though he talks on and puts the cart before the horse in the statements, shows by his knit brow and restless glance that something, somewhere, is going wrong — the flame is not blue enough, the bubbles don't rise. At last he is obliged to say "Ladies and gentlemen, I am extremely sorry that through some at present undiscovered hindrance I shall be obliged to lay aside this interesting demonstrative experiment," etc.

And so, just as the lecturer cannot point out to John Bull *why* the experiment didn't go, John Bull, who loves an explosion and doesn't see why, if you know what you are about and have pluck and capital, you can't *command* your spirits from the vasty deep, doesn't see why you can't send for two-penn'orth of stuff from the chemist and go on. Just as it would

need a Faraday to catch at the meaning of an apologetic phrase because *he* sees into the Arcana, so often to an observer an artist seems fitful and fearful, when indeed he is checkmated by invisible foes.

I know, as well as Mr. Gradgrind, the value of painting-time, and believe in work as much as he does; yet I maintain that in the long run I get more and better work done than if I were not, at such seasons, to use even the "golden hours" to allay a state of feeling which if not allayed and suffered to accumulate would terminate in hypochondria or in paralysis. For often, when no one would think me moved at all, the sense of numerous, resisted pressures within is so great that I feel like a man in the gorge of St. Paul's on the illumination night when the human currents set in furiously from Whitechapel and Temple Bar. Just such a sense of stifling, of surrounding panic, of watchfulness at all points, of consciousness that no one knows nor cares, having to take care of himself, and yet that in a few minutes he may be down under the heels of the crowd, where no scream can be heard and no breath taken, and no blow of the iron heel resisted.

The truth is that the artist's work is so intensely and incommunicably personal and inward, that it cannot be discerned unless he take infinite pains to make it known.

When a man builds a house that takes six months in the building, there is a sign and wonder to a whole

neighbourhood. Masons and carpenters, and Mike and Pat and mortar-boy, while the full-fed builder looks on with hand in pocket ordering about the whole noisy crew. To any *one* man employed on it, whether he be architect or mortar-boy, the building of a house is nothing to the building of a picture. Silent as a sunbeam on the wall of a deserted palace "where no one comes," the whole complex labour is transacted, and does not in the least seem like labour. The more it has had, the less it bears the marks of labour. It is gay and free and glowing and light, burning under the crown of a central idea which has pressed on one brain, thrilled in one hand, fluttered round one heart remote as Mariana the dejected.

A picture while in hand is like "the order of a peopled kingdom."

In the "Moorland Edge," for instance, now on my easel, how shall I dispose of those distant hazy fields and that rising smoke contained in two and a half inches of distance? Shall they be light, dark, gray, warm, blue, yellowish? If I alter one touch I alter nearly all. That tuft of new grass, is it not too sharp, too cold, too green?

But as I work I feel the soothing of the angles of the sweet fields, and the peace of the tree-tops, and the comfort of love, so—

5.20 P.M.—I lay down my brush in better spirits than I have done for some time, and instead of projecting my anxieties into the middle of next week I shall go on merrily to finish my two pictures.

So merrily jog the footpath way,
And merrily hent the stile-a;
A merry heart goes all the day,
A sad one tires in a mile-a.

With which grave observation I will go down to tea, full of "nods and becks and wreathed smiles."

2nd June 1863.

Interesting and clever sketch of Eugénie Guérin by Matthew Arnold in the *Cornhill Magazine*.

One is often curious to know how a Methodist Memoir would strike an outsider. He has picked up *Emma Tatham* (I guess in pursuance of some conscientious review of our Modern Poetry in his character as Professor at Oxford) and we get a touch of how it affects him. He is no scoffer, and I have noticed a strong effort in several of his papers at manly fairness and extended sympathy. He is a true man, a real worker, and in good earnest "up to his light." I believe the candle he works with is rather snuffy (from a Methodist point of view). Let us hope it will enable him to find much and lasting treasure.

What a blessed thing the bigness of the world is, and the completeness and isolation of its social circles, wheel within wheel. Eugénie Guérin has her orbit, and Emma Tatham has hers, and Matthew Arnold has his. His coin passes in his own country. Kreutzers won't pass in an English shop. If a traveller fresh from China were to satirise his

acquaintance Chang Wing who lives in a small town somewhere up the Yang-Tse-Kiang (you see what an array of Chinese learning I can command in its proper place), no great harm would be done anyway. He would have to make it very funny in order to excite any interest; such is the power of distance—mere removal. Let Chang Wing come here and we will pull his pigtail for him. I should like to know what a Chinaman's "consciousness" is in respect of his pigtail. It must be a great idea; far more central than such as you and I can realise. I daresay it is his honour, something to swear by, to make vows upon. When you consider the solemn risks it runs (as for instance of being tied to somebody else's pigtail), and how great a purchase it would give to his enemy if he were to catch hold of it, and what a dreadful thing it is when the hair seems as if it was going to pull your scalp off; I say, when you consider these things I believe they will throw a new light on thoughtful minds. The Chinese are a philosophic people. *We* say "Hard words break no bones"; I would venture to affirm that the equivalent proverb with them is, "Hard words pull no pigtails."

At present I see nothing better to be done than to have communion with friends. Some people may think it would be better to write for the press. At present I don't think so. What is lost in superficies is gained in force. After a course of years it is very probable that germs of thought, grown warm from the

heart, might ultimately be gathered, reset, and regrown in a more permanent form. Even if not, why need a man speak to a crowd if he has a little audience who understand him and which he understands? A man ought to have a strong call before he intrudes into the region of literature in these overpampered days, when high public rewards ought to be given to men who *won't* print their thoughts. What is the use of arrows fired in the air in comparison of arrows shot at a mark? Dissipation of thought, aimlessness, multitudinousness, are some of the faults of our age. It is the difference between the ballroom and the homestead; the one all sparkling and irritating, and superficial and dangerous, the other all profound and calm and healthful and mighty. To "study to be quiet and to mind their own business" is one of the first correctives the people of this generation need. Why did the Saviour remain in obscurity for thirty years? Why did He choose one by one, two by two, His humble disciples till they amounted to twelve; a small *class* for His esoteric teaching in Gethsemane under the olives, where "He often went with His disciples" and the seventy for a small *congregation* of scholars? Why did He so frequently complain of the crowding, and long for and seek the desert, and take moonlight rambles near the foxes' holes and the silent nests in the palms? He left us an example that we might tread in His steps. There are many reasons for all this when once it is fairly analysed. In every efficient act there is the agent and the object;

and at either end a thousand considerations show that to make an act efficient certain conditions are necessary. Christ knew this; and when the multitude thronged Him He got Peter to thrust out from the shore to isolate Himself and to command His audience. But when He wanted to plant His kingdom He carefully grafted in the hearts of Peter and James and John those living words which after His death were brought to their remembrance by the Holy Ghost. How *personal* He was. He loved Lazarus and Mary and John. He took a strong vehement interest in Peter, and followed him with love, and pity, and prayer; and He said to Thomas, "Reach hither thy hand," so that Thomas said "*My* Lord and *my* God."

When Mahomet got one convert thoroughly made it was a great step. It was then Mahomet and Co.

To his Wife.

Eusemere, *5th July* 1863.

Life seems to me to be wonderfully blessed and perfect (considering its necessary incompleteness until the restoration of all things). All things fall so well and suitably into their places that there is no want, no vexatious craving for something we have not got. I could scarcely wish to realise more on earth of an earthly kind. All I wish is to increase the knowledge of God and the sense of repose in Him as King and Father, through His Son the Mediator by whom we receive all satisfying gifts.

How much more simple Religion seems than it

used to do. I find it easier to believe the "faithful saying." Freeing my mind of what is not to the point—of all doubtful controversies and idle reasonings—I ask for the things I think I need. When dark problems as to God's dealings with the World occur to my mind, or those which relate to questions of what is Revelation or Inspiration, or how this and that can be reconciled, or anything for which there is only *un*settlement, and no data for settlement, I say broadly, "Well, if the Bible is not true, I don't know anything that is more so, and nothing so adapted to what *I* want. I will therefore, till I get clearer views, assume that it is true, and put it to experiment. If it turns out not true, I shall be no worse off than those who don't believe it. If it *is* true, then all will be well. In the meantime, as a companion I have (so to speak) picked up on the way of life, I have got to love it for its strange suitability to my notions of how man may use his powers to the best advantage; and at the lowest estimate, as far as I can judge for Man, I think it would be a grand thing if its principles could be realised. They come nearer to the right idea of harmony and power and happiness and progress than anything else I ever heard of. And so, as I said, in the meantime I will make a Venture and run the risk of my soul on this foundation."

9th July.

Sitting on a mossy stone by the lake, which is glassy and calm. A man in a little boat with a dog

is rowing across, leaving a straight silver line; a fish leaps to a fly; a few swallows dart over the lake with an occasional chirp; the sky is full of high gray clouds. No cloud rests on the hills, which lie in veils of shadow, soft and gray. The echo of children's voices by the "Flush gate," and the report of an echoing gun are heard now and then. It is pleasant to see all this in your slippers and dressing gown, which I am now doing.

How time rushes on! It seems a short time since I last sat here and saw these mountains and waters, yet a year has gone. I feel increasingly anxious that what remains of life should be used well. If life be looked at from a pagan point of view, it seems sad that Time should hurry away so fast, and that youth should leave us, and life on the whole be so short. Christianity alters all. This life is not the only sphere of being. If the great objects of life be fulfilled, who can mourn at the advance of life towards its final blessedness? *Are* these objects being fulfilled? I can't help frequently summing up my purposes and pursuits. Of those of others I cannot judge. I don't want to grind life away in a state of anxious slavery to some mistaken conception of "Duty," but I can't be content that life should be blank or aimless or even feeble, though well-meaning. How can the greatest amount of force and compactness be given to life without imposing burdens which are too heavy for it? On the whole I am obliged to believe that I am doing what I ought to do, and that

for the best part of my life I could not well have done otherwise.

It seems one of the laws of life that the outer and inner man should be compensatory to each other. The young people here are full of life and animal spirits, and those who are past middle age are not. But who would exchange the quietness of the mind and soul and its increasing light and wisdom for mere spirits? If we could have the *two*, life would be more superficially agreeable. One's soul is, like those mountains this morning, at times sunny and calm, but with a broad blue haze over them. This mingling of outward dimness with inward light and joy and rest shows where we are, and makes the prospect of heaven nearer and more precious.

To T. A.

EUSEMERE, 23*rd July*.

I HAVE been here three weeks, boating in a way so masterly that if you had seen me pulling myself about on the lake last evening it would have given you a new respect for nautical life; walking up fells, and lying on turf among moorland blackfaced sheep, with nice young ladies, and curlews and lapwings and grouse; sketching now and then, when driven by a sense of duty; reading more or less in the books current in the household, or which looked gamey enough to be pulled out of the library. This place is a paradise for a painter. Out of doors there are the mountains, among whom Helvellyn is king, and

Catchedecam grand vizier; the lake, which has a large variety of aspects in different weathers, smooth and glassy, with all the firry woods reflected and the two masts of the yacht clear under the keel, smoothly rippled when these reflections are broken yet visible, roughly rippled when no reflections are visible, rising in blue waves with white "dogs" on their tops, or what Longfellow christens "the white caps of the sea," leaden and sulky when it seems out of humour and indifferent to reflections or waves either, dark blue, cold and frowning, or reflecting the frowning fells and dusky curtains of clouds — it has as many humours as a man and woman put together.

Round the low, large slatey-looking house (defended with a slate-like mail against the fierce south-westers), over its solid stone wall, and with a porch covered with roses and honeysuckle, a glass door opening out of the dining-room to the lawn; the flower-beds, the sun-dial, the belt of birch and fir, the lake, the mountains and the beyond (which on a moderate computation is at least 1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 of English miles off). Round and behind this is a garden surrounded with stone walls and an orchard where there is grass and apple trees, and down in the depths and verging on the low pasture is a spreading oak tree with a seat under it.

> There is no fairer spoken tree
> From here to Lizard Point.

There are what the people here call "meedows"

and cornfields in the valley; solemn but amiable cows; six or eight long-legged and unformed white and brown calves, who now and then, under a persuasion (produced by secret influences from Dr. Cumming's works) that the sky is falling, gallop wildly to get out of its way; turkeys gobbling with their broods; cocks and hens and ducks and chicks and pigeons—pigeons who, like Metius Curtius, leap into the gulf of the pie-dish for the good of the community; a peacock, whose dark blue and emerald and purple glories are enhanced by the white wife, who walks where he walks, and who (between you and me) treats him shamefully. I call her Lady Cecilia Dreddlington (see *£10,000 a Year*, by S. Warren, Master in Lunacy). She has all the airs and all the neck and all the emptiness and all the exclusive insolence of the bride of Tittlebat Titmouse, and I despise her, not being an aristocrat myself (but don't mention this, for she may have influence in high quarters, and either do me a good or a bad turn).

Mr. Steward's library is ample and good, and it contains Hildersheim's works in one dark volume quarto, and on the sofa (it is the comfortablest sofa within the four seas) in the back drawing-room I did read certain chapters in it over my cigar, which I shall keep in terrorem in case thou shouldst get uppish at a dinner party, making a display of thy theology; then will I gently turn the tide of discourse to Hildersheim's works, which it is a moral impossibility that thou canst ever have heard of. But if it should

happen that thou hast, I have yet a resource—Saltmarsh's *Sparkles of Glory.*

The following was written on an excursion from Dunoon:—

To his Wife.

July 1863.

The scenery above Blairmore is exquisite. On a small scale it is like Vevay on the Lake of Geneva, only the wild crests are not covered with snow, nor do they assume the delicate visionary blue which the Alps have, even in the lower buttresses. The day is not only fine but gorgeous. If nature could fill the soul this would be a high and holy day. But to me those things which show the majesty and vastness of creation suggest most the littleness of man. I cannot see one living thing on all those purple and silver shores; I can scarcely see his dwelling-places; but I can feel that which seems to contain them all and to be superior to them all. This *Consciousness* will not be ignored. The body may seem diminished to a speck, but the soul opens and swells like an infinity.

> Doth not all that is
> Press on thy head and heart, and visibly, invisibly
> Weave its mysterious charm eternally around thee?

And yet nature, so vast and varied, will not come into it. It remains distinct, and distant, and outside. I don't possess *it.* It does not possess *me.* Nay, however near the creature comes, it is yet distant. The food I eat is only in transit through my senses, and I feel that even the body it feeds will fall from

me; so that there is only a home in me for God. I never feel it more needful to invite the Divine Presence to come and dwell in me than when I feel that all His universe can create no touch of Peace.

To his Wife.

Dunoon, 26*th July* 1863 (Sunday morning, 3 A.M.)

The exercise and novelty of yesterday (a review on the Clyde) were too much for me, although I felt in good spirits all day, so that I cannot sleep, and I get this little book and write rather than lie, revolving vague thought. But for the want of freshness next day an occasional wakeful night is a thing to be enjoyed, and that it comes to most people now and then is indicated by the verse:

> If in the night I sleepless lie,
> My soul with heavenly thoughts supply.

There is a verse, too, that I often wonder what is its meaning: "Thou holdest mine eyes waking." There is another: "Who giveth songs in the night." I have found many pleasant and thankful trains of thought filling my mind in the darkness, calm and equable impressions of truth and a steady peaceful frame of feeling, a sense of God and of salvation, a resting by faith on His Word and Will, a thousand pleasant memories of His grace, a persuasion of being where He would have me be, and on the whole of doing what He would have me do—a life going in the right track, enclosed within the bounds of the Church and

seeking its good and the good of the world. And this without any supposition of merit, but with a clear acceptance of mercy and strength in Christ.

So I thought I might as well record these feelings instead of letting them pass. They are my habit and experience under similar circumstances, and it is pleasant to share them with you. It is this bond of perfectness which has made our lives so happy, and which will continue to do so while God spares if we walk by the same rule and mind the same things.

To his Wife.

Dunoon, *3rd Aug.* 1863 (Sunday, 10.30).

Waiting to go to church—"the Established Church of Scotland." How different are my sensations this morning from those of last Sunday! I feel how great a blessing it is that the Great Father gives His children sleep. The morning has turned out fine once more and very fresh and cool. I am strolling up and down the grassy slopes. The sound of the waves below is continual and of the wind in the trees above. The beauty of nature is a gentle and soothing influence when the sense of reconciliation with the great God of nature is fixed in the soul. To the renewed mind the one must precede the other. Every tree, every daisy, every floating cloud, every breeze that bends the grass, speaks to the heart of the glorious Creator and Sustainer and multiplies either the fear or the hope.

The hugeness and immensity of the soul's interests and needs is frequently very oppressive to me. The feeling of exigency is soon suggested and not easily allayed. I need a great deal of actual Divine upholding: "I should have fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord," and I ought the more to love and serve Him; because while my fears are quickly aroused and very urgent I am almost habitually raised above them; but I need to learn more fully what is implied in the promise, "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength."

Just now I write leaning against a birch tree in my favourite daisied plot surrounded by light firs and laurels, hearing the bell of the church and trying to rejoice and rest. What will be the complete rest to which we are aspiring when all the history of the world is wound up and God is all in all! What retrospects of home repose, and wanderings here and there, of earthly histories wrought out and consummated! How can we conceive of a complete joy if those we love are not there with us? I dare hardly turn my eyes this way. It is like the beginning of an agony to think of Eternal separation: it seems as if it would fill Eternity with tears. What is that view of Truth that will wipe all tears away? What that consent to the Divine Rectitude which cannot permit a diminished joy even when the wicked are silent in darkness? I need help for such thoughts as these—God bring all we love safe within that circle

of glory. God grant we may have no loves on earth that will not be everlasting.

9th August 1863.

I HAVE been reading the newspapers a little. A newspaper often depresses me; it is so suggestive of sin and sorrow. Yet a little reflection shows that the close bringing together of things makes them seem more frequent and dark than they are. My heart bleeds at the things brought before the eye of the mind. It reminds one of the description of the Lazar House in Milton, shown to Adam by the angel as a picture of the results of the Fall. My heart gets both more firm and more tender. Every little child I see touches me; and yet I can look on terrible things with a steadier eye, knowing, as I do, that the world is not left to itself, but has a King, who is its Redeemer. I fly to Him, first for refuge, first for my own sins, the burden of which, but for His love, would be intolerable; and then for comfort as to the world's condition, but for Him so gloomy and hopeless. If I don't go far in politics it is partly because, on the one hand, it shows to the human mind such a web of helpless confusion, and, on the other hand, I believe that God sits on the waterfloods and reigns a King for ever. To keep in my own little place, doing my own work as well as I can, not taking the world's burdens on me, where I can only talk and not help, seems the best that can be for me.

Irreverent and empty twaddle about the nations and their histories and fate, prognostications on small

data constantly overturned by events, partisanship raging—all seem very vain and idle, and always make me think of the good old man who would never read a paper, but said, "It shall be well with the righteous."

He returned from this pleasant Scotch visit to the Thompsons of Dunoon by way of Edinburgh, visiting Abbotsford and Melrose Abbey.

LEIGH, 15*th August* 1863.

WALKING towards Platfold [his mother's home in Lancashire]. A coat of yellow wash is over the cottage. How I like to stop and look at the nest of our family: the fields, the pool with its rushes and flags, the old barn, and the willows and orchard trees!

The Leigh that is, and the Leigh that was, are two. The tide has washed over nearly all that is connected with the past, and our family is blown like thistle seeds here and there into new soil. It is a consolation to think that all true and good things remain the same. The God of our fathers who spake to them in their cottage is our God, and speaks to us at Stoke-Newington in the same still voices. This grand unity of essence is entirely satisfying, binding all the earth and all the heavens together. Time and Death can only steal away accidental things from us.

The air is fresh and pleasant. I am just by Atherton Bridge, with its broken lions and sphinxes, and the pools choked with water-lilies, reeds, and rushes. It seems as if one could never ponder long enough among these old scenes—old even to me; for in 1843,

after painting at some portraits I was doing in Leigh, I used to pace these very walks, and lean over the gray bridge, looking at the lilies and reeds and rushes, but with far more unquietude in my heart and nature. Now every sound and sight is sweet and refreshing. There is more beauty and meaning than I can fathom in all I see. I am filled with praise and thankfulness.

After all, association has a great deal to do with pleasure in nature. These level meadowy walks, with their whispers of poplar and fir and willow, their waving corn and rich grass, their distances of low undulating hills, the dark green pools they call "pits" with sword-sedges, bending bulrushes, and coating of thin yellow weed here and there—all that was here before railways—delight and soothe me as Keble intends his *Christian Year* to soothe the ear of the Church. Perhaps it is a fancy that there is an affinity of the frame with its native air. Be that as it may, no air seems so balmy and sweet;—the pure breath of thatched farms, quaint quiet gardens and fields where Quietude herself might walk from morning to evensong.

These "pits," with flapping lily leaves and trembling rushes, are quite a feature of the scenery. There is one in every hollow where a few fields meet. Very often there are fish in them.

To W. D.

7th October 1863.

SPENT yesterday with Parker [Professor W. K. Parker]. Mansford was there. P. talked in generals

as long as he could abide, and then he gave us such a furious storm of ornithological anatomy about a bird that was an ostrich and a crocodile and a grouse and a crane and a hen. Do you understand? all of them together, each of them separately, and was going to be published in eight quarto plates, exquisitely tinted, the cartilaginous bones one colour, the solid bones another. Do you *see*? And Owen has put his foot in it (crossing his in imitation of the mess that Professor Owen is in—executed on his own legs—from which I gather that Professor Owen is just like this [Here is a drawing of Professor Owen with legs crossed and recrossed, ending in a diminishing tail of crossings], as near as I can make out); and as to the "crocodile bird," why that is a net, you perceive, but not spread out. It is a net all in a lump, the reticulations crossing (like Professor Owen's legs) through countless ages. It is evident that Professor Owen's legs are in a mortal twist, and it is impossible that he can ever stand upright again; and so, as I was saying, there is no doubt that the reptilian character of this bird and its intricate relations to the "mound-makers" —birds that *peck* their way out of the shell and *dig* their way out of the dunghill—is also established. Beside this—now look here! there are *three* (grin) *distinct* (shakes finger) *bony*, bony plates (ready—present) on each side of the spino-occipital-basis (fire!), and Professor Owen—I'll tell you what it is—that man rather than confess an error would build up a hollow system (get his legs more and more twisted).

Well, he says there are only *two*!! (Stare, Boswellian pout, solemn appealing look, first at Mansford then at me; Mansford horrified,—I express by a shocked look the sentiment, "like his imperence").

This is good fun, but it is really *grand* to listen to P., even when one only catches glimpses of his subject.

Walking, Lordship Road, 16*th October* 1863.

The sun shines out on the glistening roads; the wind blows warm and soft; the mere ripples under its influence; a gentleman has got leave to fish in it. There is a sweet remote white cottage with a verandah seen across it, which can only be approached through fields. Lordship Road looks hollow and woody, like some country roads near parks. You like open, unbounded scenes; so do I sometimes. But generally I cleave to seclusion—shelter. The most limited scene supplies me with ample material for Thought and Imagination. Wide scenes overwhelm me with multitude and suggestion. So I like a glade—a meadow nook with an oak tree—"an odd angle of the isle,"

> A rose tree blowing
> In a green island far from all men's knowing.

Arnheim—or the mystic lake where Fenimore Cooper lays the whole scene of one of his Mohican stories,

> The dim tarn of Auber,
> The misty mid-region of Weir.

To Mrs. HALL.

11*th November* 1863.

Read a chapter or two in *David Copperfield*. Mr. Micawber fills me with wholesome terror; not that, like him, I ever expected, in his sense, anything to "turn up," but because I see that all "being behindhand" has a fatal quality about it. I never saw this as I see it now, because I never saw any danger of my being behindhand. I used to feel sure that Work must bring reward. So it does, as I experience, in the long-run. But I have seen that attempt after attempt may be made in vain. That vague abstraction, Society, which Mrs. Micawber scolds and Mr. M. defies, is, I see, an impregnable thing so long as it is looked at in the abstract. There is both Justice and Mercy in the world if you come into contact with those who have them. Kindness and Help there are also, or "Society" would have trampled me under long ago.

Nov. 12.—I'll just tell you what it is, women's opinion about women's beauty is just worth nothing. They haven't the least idea how women look to the other sex, and just as little of how they look in the abstract. This disparaging remark arises out of your criticism of my picture women. But, at the same time, it causes me to review that subject. My first observation is, that every painter has had, and has, his favourite style of face, and it is always peeping out in his works. Raffaele, M. Angelo, Titian, Perugino, Rossetti, Millais, Frith. This comes from his notion either of beauty, or what

he likes. A painter won't do what he doesn't like, even though others may call it beautiful. And whatever type he chooses, there will be six out of ten who will not like it, and four will pronounce it "ugly." Also, another thing: an artist makes his first sketch often from his nearest model, and seldom effaces his first impression, even though he consult subsequent models. The great difficulty of procuring models is certainly the root and ground of most of these similarities. It is said of Perugino that he was miserly, and when he had paid a model to sit, he used up the sketch as often as he could, to save trouble and expense. Professional models, as Etty used to say, "take a good deal of the gilt off the gingerbread."

I muse deep on my painter course, not that I am in any doubt or perplexity, for I think I have found a footpath through the forest.

I feel a stirring of far greater powers than will ever find their earthly development. You will be more likely to believe this than most people (besides it is not *said* to "most people," and they have nothing to do with it), and it is one of the things with which my religion and philosophy have to do battle. I can throw light on it by some analysis of Leslie's course. Leslie was the type of a painter, pure and simple. What did it cost him? It cost him all his time. He did not profess to be a scholar. He read Shakespeare, Smollett, etc., Goldsmith, Cervantes, Addison, the Bible. *All* his subjects were

got out of these. His first picture was exhibited when he was twenty-three, "Sir Roger de Coverley going to Church." His last of any vigour was, "Sir Roger de Coverley *in* Church," and all the interval was a placid seclusion among those few authors, *expressing* out of them by constant reading a few, very few, subjects from each; and on this foundation all his labours were built. If you don't know it, you will be surprised to hear that a good half of his whole life work is at South Kensington. Including his heads (of any importance), I can only mark fifty-six pictures which deserve the name of serious effort. He painted duplicates of the principal ones, but here no invention was required. He lived to be sixty-five. Including small portraits, he painted about 120 pictures in forty mature years: three per year, but most of them small. The time was not bestowed on mere finish; it was absorbed in the action of consummate Taste and Judgment. On the floor of the picture, "The Dinner in Ford's house," there are about half a dozen small flowers scattered. It is recorded that for these flowers there are sheets on sheets of studies in water-colours of flowers from nature. That was his life's work. He wrote three or four mild books—mild, prudent, unselfish books — in which, even in the autobiography — he scarcely mentions his own work, so we know little about him. He strolled half an hour in the garden before breakfast, gathered a flower in flower time, and painted all day. In the

evening he either read by his fireside, or talked to a friend who "liked pictures," or went to see one who did, or who *had* good pictures. If a man didn't like pictures, he didn't care two pins for him. He was always in low water as to money; most of his life in debt. He had a few good friends, Lord Egremont particularly. Lord E. would like him because Leslie was—must have been—a gentleman of the old school, honourable, quiet, simple, undemonstrative, tasteful. Also Mr. Sheepshanks. Now I heard Mr. Sheepshanks say, and he said it to me, "Yes, poor fellow, I used to have him to dinner on a Sunday, and his wife and children. He had to work hard enough, for he had a large family. When I bought that picture (a child, Leslie's own, drawing a cart in a garden), he said, 'If you'll take this, I'll never draw trees any more,' for," added Sheepshanks, "his trees were very bad indeed."

I used to see Leslie at R.A. lectures and soirees. He was a little, dry, prosaic-looking man with short black hair over his forehead, and like a country shoemaker in his best clothes.

Scene in Leslie's Studio

on a cold winter evening with a fire, which he keeps poking to brighten.

He is quite restless, and has been all the afternoon. He pokes his lips out and stares, with the

poker in his hand. He makes a grimace at the corner of the ceiling in an abstracted manner, and then heaves a great sigh and blows like a porpoise. Then he ruffles his forehead into a ploughed field by elevating his eyebrows as far as they will go, gapes like a fish, and goes into a cataleptic stony stare at a hot coal. He does, in fact, what thoughtful people do when they are threatened with an execution in the house. What is it all about? I'll tell you as if I saw it. He is thinking whether he had better put that bit of white flower under the tablecloth in the picture of "The Dinner at Ford's house." One would think, to see his light and airy touch, that he had flitted over his pictures like a swallow. Oh dear! the mouth of Mrs. Page, the lady in black and amber, with her charming laugh, would cost days of watching, and musing, and fidget, and alteration.

Nov. 13.—I fall back on this truth, that, after all, the greatest thing about a picture is its *Conception*—the *Thought* of it. If this be sufficiently conveyed, the highest of all its purposes is served.

28*th November* 1863.

Had a turn at Leslie's pictures yesterday, rummaging over them with the catalogue and making notes of all the details. In my opinion there is scarce a modern painter like him. Mere finish, smoothing up of hands and faces, even with the floral colour of Mulready, considering the enormous

labour it takes, is nothing to the salt-breezy *life* of Leslie's *indications*. Instead of attempting a close deceptive imitation he *thinks* in delicious touches of oil colour, and with a handling so refined and piquant as makes even Mulready seem dogged and laborious. I would rather have the indescribable vigour of the slightly painted "Bourgeois Gentilhomme," the racy "lunge" of the foil which bends against his distracted breast wielded by his maid-servant, than any single picture of Mulready's in which you can't help getting entangled in the sweet reflection that knuckles are pink and veins are blue, and that emerald green and purple look very well together. Leslie sweeps all this away, and you brim over with laughter at the poor terrified lumbering affectation of the old gentleman who thinks it is the thing "to fence," and the saucy spirit of the maid with the broom, who, knowing nothing about "carte and tierce," knows, nevertheless, like Bailie Nicol Jarvie, how to strike home. What is called his want of "colour" is for the most part mere *disdain*. He had no boarding-school taste for pink and sea-green, and believed the world of men and women to be a quiet mixture as to colour. He was a *Man* painter, and not one who matched tints with a snuffle.

6th December 1863.

I WOKE up to a pleasant fact as I sat reading this evening, viz. that J. F.'s pleasure in art is having a good stimulating influence on me, just as on a

larger scale Schiller had on Goethe. I seldom see a thing at once: I wake up to it, and then it becomes a strong idea. My life for twenty years has been so locked in that I have been actor and audience both, and though I know quite well that through my etchings and a *few* pictures I have been gaining the rudiments of a circle where my life is felt, no one scarcely has come near to me with any of the *instinctive* love of what makes my intellectual life-work. Davies does, certainly; but I have seen him too seldom to get that salt-freshness of stimulus. The Rossettis and Ruskins I dare not, much as I admire them, go often to. J. F.'s visit on Monday put this into my head—his *rooting* among the sketches and curiosity to find some new "study." This sort of interest has just the kind of temporary incitation that is needed in a studio. There is some danger of becoming too much isolated, for although my range of study has embraced literary aims, I never intended nor intend to ally myself with literature and so confuse my life. I am a Monumentalist, an artist in an original field (a field where you can see over the hedge into literature and morals and religion). From my chosen position I don't intend to move. It is perfectly suited to me, to my power, to my tastes, to my habits. I have no need to look beyond it. I don't say I will do no pictures in the ordinary sense, because I will; but my speciality will be Idylls in Oil. And all I ask is current stimulus and undisturbed leisure to produce them.

To W. D.

29*th Dec.* 1863.

The delight with which I think of the "Studies" already gone out beats any form of Art satisfaction I have yet experienced. My *forte* lies there just as Stothard's really did. His small oil studies are the most charming things he did, and they exactly correspond in size and aim to my own.

And I see very clearly that it is worth my while to make them good and brilliant, and I intend to do so. J. F. H. chose a charming subject—"Narcissus."

Shall read poetry and sketch nature with new aims and under a new light. Your Vignetting is also a great discovery, a great instrument. The tune of life is played by finding out the right pressure on the keys, the right inflations of the breath. Press or blow too hard and you make a grunt or a squeak. Press too lightly and blow timidly and you cannot make the music speak. But acquire the touch and the divine breathing, and out comes the mellow music flooding hill and dale. Now Vignetting and Monumentalism for thee and for me is this finding how to touch and how to blow. For thee a vast repertory of "Aspects of Nature," for me a gallant horse to carry my thoughts without my becoming footsore and travel worn; a well-trained Pegasus that doesn't kick, that will amble in the lane, walk over the downs, and on wild windy evenings when the crescent rises or sinks, will take a burst up into the skies and bring me down safe.

> Where are you going so high, so high?
> I'm going to sweep cobwebs out of the sky,
> And I'll be with you by and by.

And so, old Boy, all this last 20 years has been "the tilling of a field that the Lord hath blessed." One of my aims now will be Colour. What Bewick's tail-pieces are to engraving so is Monumentalism to Painting — Tennyson's Brook compared with the Thames on which the ships go and into which critical filth is poured till it is noisome, a tinkling brook making all green where it runs:

> With here and there a lusty trout,
> And here and there a grayling:

Goldsmith working his way among Belgian villages by the aid of his flute, and not "an artiste" craving applause and bread in critical concert rooms and against all sorts of odds.

To Mrs. HALL.

January 1864.

Took down Tennyson; glanced at the fly-leaf—"J. Smetham, 1843." That book has a charm for me that no other book but the Bible has. It is like moonlight and music and the shores of old romance and the "light that never was on sea or land." I know by heart, if not by spontaneous memory, every line of his poems. The days of my youth are enfolded in their *scent*, as the scent of violets hidden in the green. My memory kindles over them; my blood runs more quickly; my nerves thrill, and love and joy, even through the dusky shades that in places hang over the

past, are recalled. The *rabies* for Tennyson has passed with the public, but he has taken his immortal seat among the poets.

An Old Book, frail as it seems, is an *awful* thing. It preserves its personal identity. Paper is more unchangeable than stone. We have the very books on which Henry of Huntingdon wrote and looked, and the drawings upon which Raffaele rested his hand; but the drifting sand, and changing earth-mounds, and crumbling stones, have really altered the very *being* of scenery. Nothing remains but the latitude and longitude. The eye walks the enclosures of an old book as patiently as the feet traverse meadow and wilderness, yet it remains for traveller after traveller to wander in. At a cunning corner of the road, at the same page, top or bottom, lies lurking the witty sentence that relaxes every traveller's face into a smile, or the pathetic lines that unlock the fountain of tears; and in years to come the traveller's eyes that come that way will "weep there."

To T. A.

Sunday.

A tender April morning opening the pores of the nature and filling it with "all the fulness of the Spring." All is easy and bland. Religiously, no state is without its materials for fear. The service on Friday was so refreshing and soothing; yesterday so fine in the open air all day long; to-day is so pleasant and restful, that Mephistopheles is disposed to say,

"Upon my word, this is very pleasant work. I thought religion was a sort of being crucified. It is time to turn pious myself." This is really too bad. Nothing pleases Mephistopheles (Mephistopheles is Suggestor in Ordinary to one stronger than he and darker). Talleyrand, Machiavelli, Ahithophel, are only fragments of Mephistopheles. So I'm called to consider whether what I suppose to be Divine Rest is the voluptuous apathy in which the men of Laish lay when the sword brake in on them, "a bluidy, bluidy ane." Still we ought not to be cheated out of our comfort because Mephistopheles exhorts us to make ourselves long-faced and miserable in order to show that we are true men. Wisdom is justified of her children. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, "Behold a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." John the Baptist came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, "He hath a devil."

To keep up the sacrifice of Praise and Prayer among the violet banks, "stealing and giving odours" while the spell of beauty lies on you, and the soft west wind fills you with a tingling sense of immunity, requires fresh baptisms of grace; and to triumph in Christ over joy and prosperity is as difficult as over grief and pain.

GREEN STREET GREEN.

ONE simple attribute of *Place*—true of course of Cheapside, but more impressive in the deep country—is peculiarly solemn. A *Place* has its solitary entity;

just as a soul has. There is that bend in the road, for example, where the cottage stands, "built in 1705" (when Queen Anne, Queen Anne, she sat in the sun !) Well, that bend in the road is only *seen* at the bend. You must go to *it*, as David to his lost child, it won't come to *you*. There, under all solar and astral aspects; when snow loads the fir tree, or Autumn shakes the brown corn in the ridge above it, it asserts its right to locality, as the soul to being. The latitude and longitude are its own; one speck of a globe with its own right line that reaches some star vertical to itself, "O where and O where?" is a very important question. The individuality of space is a touching element in the Universe.

To the Rev. M. C. TAYLOR.

Since portraiture went down, it has taxed my wits to the utmost to till the more poetic side of my calling. Parnassus was ever barren, I suppose; only if a man by circumstances is left high and dry on it he must get what he can out of it. I have to keep hold—by correspondence as well as by painting—of a great many threads; first this, then that, and by this means get along somehow; but it leaves me often devoid both of time and energy to have the converse I should like with even my best friends. I sometimes feel ludicrously like a street musician who plays drum and bagpipe, pan's pipe, and cymbals all at once with mouth, fingers, elbow, and knees. It is a good thing that it answers somehow, and that people

throw pennies enough out of the window to keep us all alive.

To his Brother.

10*th February* 1865.

Nothing can be more enchanting than the method of study which I have practised for nearly twenty years. Whatever it may be for others, for an artist it is a glorious way:

(And now they never meet in grove or green
But they do *Square.*)

You must therefore fancy that almost every morning somewhere between 9 and 11 A.M. I am "squaring"; not like Tom Sayers, but otherwise. For example, this is a scribbly little square [drawing] containing a meditation on vers. 36, 37. What a great deal is implied in the words "having land." And here is "the Son of Consolation" pacing his (paternal?) acres, the Cyprian fields, thinking of——. Did he never wander there like Isaac with his hands behind him musing at eventide?

If you suppose every fragment to be "squared" on this principle, and the square to grow a little at every recurrence to it, and sometimes to get faint hues of colour that deepen into a miniature picture at last, you have a notion of the shape my meditations take. I call it Monumentalism, *i.e.* instead of letting ideas die I build to each a lasting monument. The effect—the mental effect—is surprising, though I use it most of all for Bible work.

To T. A.

EVERY sentence penned in letter or ventilator, every "square" embodying some new discovery of Divine or Human *fact*, is something rescued from the rush of Oblivion.

"He being dead, yet speaketh." A man ought to contrive, as far as may be, to embalm his life so that it shall last when the body is gone to dust. The question is not whether he can give *new* thoughts, but *right* thoughts—echoes of truth—where there would otherwise be *no* thoughts. He was a reflective man who carried a sponge to fight the Devil with.

To T. A.

16*th February* 1865.

READ after dinner Haydon's lecture on Wilkie. That lecture comprises much of the bitter truth which seems to make any labour or trouble light, that enables a man to find the happy middle way so next to impossible to find in Art. It has been found by a few, and ought to be sought by many more. Wilkie, after painting the "Blind Fiddler," was suddenly placed on the pinnacle of fame, and Haydon graphically describes the effect. The older men of influence were incensed, and sought high and low for a rival to pull Wilkie down. They found a sort of rival in Bird of Bristol, and then glided in and out among patrons as snakes glide. Sir G. Beaumont was "fond of a new genius," and Fuseli the painter asked in a hoarse whisper of Haydon, "what Sir George thought."

He, Sir George, was to Art, what "the Rulers" were to Religion of old. Then they advised Wilkie, who was humble, and timid, and modest, and diligent, next Exhibition to withdraw his picture, lest Bird's should floor it, or as the phrase goes, "kill it." Wilkie was humble and sensitive enough to comply. Then the Rulers trampled on him the more: said he was afraid of contest with Bird. Then, affecting a pity for him, they got the Prince Regent to buy Bird's picture and to order a pendant to it from Wilkie, as if Wilkie were make-weight to Bird. Then Haydon found Wilkie lying on his sofa, almost dying, with the prayerbook in his hand, and gasping for breath. Then followed illness, fever, slow restoration, life-long liability to disease.

The force of this can only be felt by those capable of estimating the art of Bird and Wilkie. Says Haydon, "I date my disgust at the mean passions of the Art from this moment. The ecstasy, the fears, the hopes, the prophecies, that Wilkie would be done for, are not to be expressed, or understood now, after so many years; but I witnessed all."

It is true that Haydon quarrelled like a madman with these things, and ruined himself; and he saw no medium between what he called the "toadyism" of Wilkie, and his own rampant rebellion against the world as it is.

But if he be not greedy of fame or gain, and he have ability, there *is* a medium between servility on the one hand and uproar on the other.

Such a victory has been gained by old Linnell, the true patron and friend of Blake, when he, Linnell, had little to spare.

I should like to throw a bouquet to old Linnell, who defied the Academy, and the dealers, and the public, and everybody else by work and waiting, though the snow of age was beginning to fall on his summit before it was seen that his crest was higher than that of others.[1]

To T. A.

THE other day I met a scholastic prosaic man who said, "Now I should like to know what Tennyson meant by

Spinning for ever down the ringing grooves of change.

A friend of mine did ask him, and he said, 'It was to be understood figuratively, it was an ideal expression.' Humph! Now I should like to know what sort of an explanation *that* is!"

I would hazard a conjecture, however, at this distance of time. Did you ever see tenpence spilt on a jetty, chiefly in ha'pence? The tenpence is "change," without a doubt. Many of the ha'pence would "spin" on the planks, and "ring" in the "grooves" or open spaces between them. Let the

[1] Mr. Linnell paid a high tribute of respect to the writer of these letters, in that he wished him to be his literary executor and biographer. This, however, James Smetham did not feel himself at liberty to undertake.

great world change its positions and aspects as frequently as these coppers change *their* positions and *their* aspects. "Let" it; what then? Why not? Avast!

If now you give your Captain Cuttle's hook a wave in the air, and cock your eye on the horizon, it seems to me you are out of your difficulty as completely as you are ever likely to be.

He received the following letter from Rossetti:—

16 Cheyne Walk, 21*st November* 1865.

My dear Smetham—Thanks for your letter of the other day, which is very interesting, and lets me into much concerning you. I am afraid you will think no better of me for pronouncing the commonplace verdict that what you lack is simply ambition, *i.e.* the feeling of pure rage and self-hatred when any one else does better than you do. This in an ambitious mind leads not to envy in the least, but to self-scrutiny on all sides, and that to something if anything can. You comfort yourself with other things, whereas art must be its own comforter or else comfortless.

I will hope to see you to-morrow to dinner at six. After which we will go to Scott's, and you remember I have a bed for you; and am meanwhile and ever, my dear Smetham, very sincerely yours, D. G. Rossetti.

And do please kindly let more distant forms be dropped on both sides, being, as we are, almost ten-year-old friends.

To his Brother.

Went on Thursday to the Portrait Gallery at South Kensington—the third and last assemblage, and containing the whole semblance of our era. Among

other records is the very portrait of Cowper's mother to which he wrote the lines so well known, "O that those lips had language," etc.—a most affecting record. There are seventy portraits by Sir T. Lawrence: the great Duke in his fresh prime, who used to take his sittings at 7 A.M., a picture retaining somewhere the last touch of "the vanished hand," as when Lawrence said, "There, that will do now," strikes strangely on the senses and intellect and heart. Men taken in their prime, who were afterwards seen in their decay, and now not seen at all—how strange is the arresting process! Sir John Moore bade Lawrence "good morning," and went to Corunna, and was "buried darkly at dead of night." Castlereagh made his bow and then destroyed himself; but there are no traces of these subsequent histories in the silent canvases. There are four pencil drawings of Lamb, Coleridge, Southey, Wordsworth (when Coleridge was 23) for Cottle of Bristol—Coleridge with white hair, by Phillips, and also (with a cathedral window) by Washington Allston, and in both cases with a snuff-box. There is Tom Moore by Lawrence, small, smart, wonderfully painted, and Campbell by Lawrence, and Byron by Phillips. In Byron's *Journal* there is this entry: "Sat to Phillips for faces." Here is the "faces" as fresh as ever, and where is Byron? There is Phillips himself with a cloak over his shoulder, very gentlemanly. I remember as a young man Phillips's kindness to me. It determined me to stay in London and study at the Academy. How these *links* move one! A gallery

like this with sufficient knowledge is more enchanting than an Arabian night. There is a drawing of Arthur Hallam, as a boy of 16, by the side of his father—that is to say, the pictures are side by side.

Blest be the art that can immortalise.

And what a comfortable proverb is that: "A cat may look at a king." Here are awful warriors and sages and poets and judges who would make you shake in your shoes, and yet you may poke your nose within an inch of their faces. As dependable likenesses how vastly superior are all since Hogarth to Lely and Kneller, and indeed to Vandyke in some respects. Lawrence beautified his subjects, but he sought out the most trifling "modellings" in his faces and fixed them for ever. The ordinary portrait-painters of our era give us what may be reasoned upon.

To J. F. H.

21*st May* 1866 (Monday, 8 P.M.)

It is not often on week days that I can follow up any serious thoughts with the pen. All my wit is taxed to cut and contrive for current work, and any leisure is only good for a bit of recreation and a joke or two to keep one's spirits up.

Dickens, in a bright speech as chairman at the dinner of the Newspaper Press Fund yesterday, gave a graphic description of the romantic toils of the reporter; but these compared with his subsequent ones as literary *inventor* were light. To any man of health

and pluck mere action and energy are delightful. I never could much value a man for being *merely* "a scholar," for it is so easy if a man wills to become one. He has but to sit all day eating books. A far different thing is invention, especially invention by which you have to live, which it requires the toil of months to produce, and which yet a breath may blast. All the array of *fact* to be at hand, and wielded under certain conditions, subjected to delicate æsthetic laws, which are not written on brass, but are like the airy music and flying noises on Prospero's island—so filmy and fine—and then exposed to the coarse and blustering popular judgment. And this not at full leisure, but on the rigid conditions of supply and demand, made to turn out whether you will or no—as the captive Jews were buffeted and bid to sing "one of the songs of Zion." "How can we sing in a strange land?" said they. "Anything else you like: tales, histories, carpenter's and smith's work, fetching and carrying to any extent; but those delicate songs which we used to sing in the height of Zion, warbling among the corn-lands and the vineyards, don't ask us."

"No song, no supper," says the Babylonian; "you and your Jew's harp."

One wouldn't care so much if it comported with one's views to become a mere David Roberts or view-taker. The penalty you pay for affecting invention is to be taxed in all your powers and passions. No doubt if you succeed you get some of the rewards of repute, and when a man is hot set on *that* it is (as one

of the famous says) "purgatory to have, and hell to want."

There *is* a way (which the vulture's eye hath not seen) in which a man may pursue what the pursuers of fame pursue, and yet find neither purgatory nor the worst alternative; but that secret path is the path of increased toil and dizzy climbing. The man who, while putting forth all his mental energy, wishes to find rest to his soul, must fight ten where the other fights only one. But with this difference, that he is sure to *win*. This is true. I believe some men have as truly vanquished fame, as others covetousness or pleasure. One is as hard as the other. One is as easy as the other. Religion can so lift a man up that the rains and floods can't shake his house. But even so much religion won't give a man leisure, though it gives him peace. The world can't understand the believer's life. With a worldling "drive" is either distraction or pain or oblivion. Not so with the believer. He may be "pressed out of measure beyond strength," but he is at *rest*. "Ye shall find rest unto your souls."—

Got your ventilator fresh as buttercups. "One word at or near the spot is worth a whole cartload of recollections" (Gray the poet).

To J. F. H.

6th June.

Others apart sat on a hill retired
In thoughts more elevate, and reasoned high
Of Providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate,
Fix'd fate, freewill, foreknowledge absolute,
And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.

Of good and evil much they argued then,
Of happiness and final misery,
Passion and apathy, and glory and shame:
Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy;
Yet with a pleasing sorcery could charm
Pain for awhile, or anguish, and excite
Fallacious hope, or arm th' obdured breast
With stubborn patience, as with triple steel.

To those who know God one of the most saddening sights is these groups of dreamers on the hillsides, seen from the vale of humble love.

As opium laps the votary of it in Elysium, so, exactly so, Thought sustains the thoughtless. They stick thought about them as a dignity and adornment, as the idiot sticks the peacock's feather in his wispy, tangled hair. One would think they would wake sometimes and see things rightly through the misty gaps in their dreaming and go wild, or be like Belshazzar when he saw the hand on the wall. Perhaps they do sometimes. Perhaps, at some new sweep of the endless "mazes," they call out in the lonely deserts or frightful hollows of the monstrous hills where there is none to hear, when the whole air hurtles with uncertain noises and the earth vibrates with the tread of gigantic footsteps, and the eyes strain with "fearful lookings for."

But in the main it is not so. "Pleasing sorcery," "fallacious hope," "stubborn patience," these are the workings of the Circean cup of Pride and Thought. The calmest of men are these placidly obdurate.

When a man is full of opium you may shake him

rudely, but he is not provoked. Whether in the body or out of it he cannot tell; he is beyond vulgar hauling. De Quincey made attempt after attempt to recover himself out of the snare of opium, but the deep-rooted fascination was too much for him, and though the dreams became darker and vaster, and the awaking to the cold drizzle of life more intolerable month by month, he was led downward by the spell—such as you see Burne Jones illustrating in the Old Water-colour Society's Exhibition, where Merlin can't help himself, though the lid of the sepulchre rises to admit him, then to seal him safely for ever and ever.

What set this fragment in motion, though, was this reflection, that what makes religion vital is not the stern proud *thinkings about it*; it is the "drawing near unto God"; it is the "coming boldly to the Throne of Grace." It is a humbling thing for the little Rotifer with his two little wheels of Thought and Imagination creating his little currents and finding his food in the vortex he makes, to realise his place in the universe. The Rotifer and the "Great Thinker" who will not draw nigh to God seem a pair. He makes a stir among the Rotifera, and is the fear and dread of the Polygastri—something or other; but that is his reward, his "be-all" although not his "end-all." The Rotifer has the best of it. He is in his place, doing his happy little whizzing duty. He lives in God. He reveals God. He proclaims God to all who gaze and see his wheels at work. But the other one has unmoor'd himself. He goes about bullying the Poly-

ceteras *for the time being.* He has the best of it in his "pleasing sorcery," "fallacious hope," "stubborn patience"; yes, the best of it among the Poly-what's-their-names; but then the whole organic relations are not yet brought to the test—the time of the end has not yet come. The Rotifer that is now making vortices in the north-west bay of a teaspoon may find himself somewhere else in a hundred years. Fancy a Rotifer who in one year is on terms with the inhabitants of a teacup being removed in time out of sight, out of mind, into some unsounded dark depth of the Pacific, where we can't follow him or watch him!

Man lives as if he was in the hands of the present, and as if he bore no fixed relation to a whole. He publishes his quarto or duodecimo, and it is circulated by tens of thousands, and he thinks he has *done it.* But he has only done a little bit of it—whirled his wheels, made his vortex, swallowed the Polys that happened to be in the nor'west bay of the teaspoon. But—he'll be *caught alone* some day?

About Stothard, I want to know why "They" didn't buy up his work and croodle over it a little sooner? why they let him have an execution in his house in Newman Street? There goes the calm, seedy, philosopher-looking old man, walking for hours with his sketch-book, and getting life from the fresh air, and knowledge from the hedges and from the passing incidents of being, and then he plants himself with one foot on the rail of his easel till it is

worn through, and does things for 30s. that fetch 20 guineas now that he can't know about it.

To J. F. H.

SOUTHPORT.

THE dwelling on any subject of study is very calming and soothing. I am at present on the Epistle to the Hebrews. The great difference of such a subject from all others is that all the interests of Time and Eternity are wrapped up in it. The scrutiny of a title-deed to £100,000 a year is nothing to it. How should it be? Is there a Christ? Is He the Heir of all things? Was He made flesh? Did He offer the all-perfect sacrifice? Did He supersede the old order of priests? Is He the Mediator of a new and better Covenant? What are the terms of that Covenant? There are no questions like these. They raise, in their very investigation, the whole soul into the Empyrean. All other interests seem low, trivial, petty, momentary. How needful to search the Scriptures to see "if these things *are* so"! Certainly the God of Truth desires us to receive nothing that is not in accordance with the clearest reason, nor to render any but a "reasonable service." I am astonished, too, at the imperative tone of this Epistle, and the element of holy scorn against those who refuse to go into these great questions carefully. The Voice seems to shake the heavens and the earth in order to establish in the hearts of the obedient the kingdom that cannot be moved.

The effect of a more detailed study of such an Epistle is not to be enough set forth. It is as the difference between a well-constructed but breathless body, beautiful and strong, and the same body when the breath of life comes into it. It gazes, it speaks, it moves with ease, simplicity, and power; it is warm, glowing, attractive, influential at every pore. It is mighty through God. It arises and stands upon its feet. Now, no one can describe the difference between inanimation and *life*, but the whole nature echoes loudly to it. "Because I live," says the Great High Priest, "ye shall live also."

I only see more and more that dealing with "Doubt" is dealing with a phantom changeable and elusive as a writhing mist about an inaccessible crag.

"If we believe that Jesus died and rose from the dead." How much hinges on this! What step behind the Veil can we take without this? Is it annihilation, or is it metempsychosis, or is it absorption into the Divine Nature if there be one? Ask all the ages, and you have just a dead silence of six thousand years. You may fancy a ghostly laugh at your perplexity, but it is all fancy. There is nothing so distinct as laughter. It is all blank and world-wide silence. There is a little dust before your eyes, and that is all you know of the matter.

In Art, if a man says Titian cannot colour, or that Danby's landscapes are not "poetic," *I'm done*. Some folks would find pleasure in firing up, accusing the objector of want of "soul," others would begin a

thesis, and refer to *Burke on the Sublime*; but what strikes me, even in Art, is the gigantic quantities to be dealt with in discussion, their subtleties, and the variable basis arising from capacity, knowledge, taste, etc. Random hints, or mere syllogistic foiling, are waste of breath and energy, and the discussion is a matter of years and protracted study.

But to the believer in Danby all the persuasion and settlement is *there*—the data of "the poetic"—that dark pines cutting crimson horizons are poetic; that misty tarns with the purple evening departing from them are poetic; or that Danby's pines and Danby's tarns are so, if a hundred instances in which pines and tarns are not so in other men's pictures, or were not so in given circumstances in nature, were cited. "No," says the cautious mind, "here is no chance of coming to a conclusion; too many things to be stated, sorted, compared." Rossetti would grant me at once the whole question, because at a glance he *sees* the whole. Here is a man who does not, or will not. No matter, let us turn the conversation. But no; he has new questions about the nature and value of "authority." What if Rossetti agrees with you about Danby? Rossetti is not infallible, and Frith thinks Danby's pictures "miserable." "Rossetti? where are *his* pictures to be seen? Now Frith painted for the Queen and Royal Family, and is R.A."

Even in painting, the mere conception of disputation gives me a sense of being wholly addle-headed.

Yet Titian *is* a colourist, and Danby's pictures *are* poetic; and those who say they are not are in a quagmire. But those who understand Titian and Danby didn't argue themselves up to it. They saw it at once, as soon as they clapped eyes on them. The evidence came with a flood of clear light.

In perspective, now, it is otherwise. "I've only this point short, I know all the rest." I say, "My dear fellow, your very difficulty shows you don't know the first principles." Here it is merely a matter of time and attention, unless he deny data. "Rays of light don't go in straight lines; I've a right to my opinion; light is a fluid."

"But you must grant that they do." "I can't." "Then, of course, we had better say Good morning."

But in Religion, it always seems to me that while one simple, central, line of truth is so plain that peer, ploughman, philosopher, child, may all see it and walk in it, all but that one way is sheer morass, and argument is like trying to fill up a morass, or to pick one's way across a bit of it. It *gives* at every point.

When Paul preached, he preached Jesus and the Resurrection; he reasoned of Righteousness, Temperance, and Judgment to come; he told his own experience. Some believed and were saved; some trembled and delayed to obey; some mocked; some doubted; some contradicted; some blasphemed. And that is a summary of what is to be done, and what will happen in regard to the gospel from age to age.

The following is a note from Mr. Ruskin, in answer to one telling of the death of James Smetham's mother :—

3rd March 1867.

Dear Smetham –Thank you for your note. I am always glad to hear from you. You are happy in feeling that your mother *is* "at rest." My father died this day three years ; but *I* look when I pass, at the place where he lies as at a prison from the blue sky and things he loved. I've had many a loss since, of various kinds, too—Deaths in life ; worse than Deaths true. You are very happy in your peace.—Ever affectionately yours, J. Ruskin.

To Mrs. TAYLOR.

We have often to pay a high price for our best blessings ; and how little it matters what the momentary mood or aspect of affairs may be, if out of it comes the true blessing—knowledge of God's will in higher degrees, and obedience to it, and rest in Him ! What son is he whom the Father chastens not ? If our own wisdom and wit and energy had to shape things to a good end, we should in most cases be quite at our wit's end ; but it is not so. A God of infinite perfections has the whole of our lot in His hands, sees the end from the beginning, knows how to adjust the strain of trouble to our powers of endurance, sends appropriate little mitigations of one kind or another, like temporary cordials ; and by a long and wonderful series of interventions, succours, and secret workings, Jacob, who at one time said, "All these things are against me," finds himself housed in Goshen, in the land of light. In the training and discipline, particularly of the families of

God's people, as we read of it in biographies, hear of it in Church fellowship, talk it over in private, how large and important a part does trouble play!

To T. A.

Studio, 11.20. Saturday, 19*th July* 1868.

Just going off to Hampstead Heath with the children. It is my eldest boy's birthday, age 13.

Did I ever rave about the Rotifer to *you*—I have to others, I know—but to *you*? I think not. I will to-day for a while if possible. Some folk want Whales, Mammoths, Iguanodons, Behemoths, to rave about. They won't rave under two tons. But being a speck myself, my speculations are exhausted and overdone, and carried out of soundings by a Rotifer.

7.45 P.M., Studio.—That last paragraph was the occasion of more than I thought, and it shows how the events of our life may depend on the most casual trifles. I wrote the last paragraph, put on my straw hat, got ready to set off with the boys, got a little sketch-book, lest it should be wanted, went out at the side door, and just before opening the trellis gate felt in my right waistcoat pocket for I really forget what, but pulled out instead a scrap cut out of a paper weeks ago, a little poem by Bishop Middleton. The "ring" of the verse struck me, and my head being full of the Rotifer, I got out the sketch-book, and on the way to the rail, and in the railway carriage, and on the heath, I wrote the poem which I shall now proceed to publish by sending you a copy.

THE ROTIFER.[1]

When, out in midnight's huge expanse,
  Our gazing orbits stop
On galaxies in braided dance—
  The Sea becomes a drop.

But when, to microscopic ken,
  Life's lessening gulfs lie free—
The inverted wonder turns, and then
  The drop becomes a Sea!

And look! the tideless, shoreless deep
  Translucent to the eye,
Is charged with vital shapes that keep
  All forms of monarchy.

Behemoth of the small abyss,
  With ribs of glass-like steel—
The force which makes the kingdom his,
  Turns his colossal wheel.

And down a shining vortex slide
  His helpless myriad prey,
Who gathered life from depths that hide,
  Where none could search but they.

And yet, who knows? even there the scale
  Of downward life begins,
Where less leviathans prevail,
  And lesser prey-wheel spins.

O what is great and what is small,
  And what the solemn bound
Of great and little, where the *all*,
  The *last* of life is found?

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[1] A few copies of this were printed by a friend.

To Thee, the ONE—the Infinite—
Is neither large nor less—
Where thundering sun-stars sweep and light
The chasms of nothingness.

Or where, enclosed in globe on globe,
The lessening less descends—
Majestic Being drops her robe,
And Life's last throbbing ends.

Great God! whose day's a thousand years—
Whose thousand years a day—
Pity the doubts—forgive the fears
Which vex me on my way!

Why should I fear, who, wondering, see
Those deeps too small to view?
The Power that made such life to be,
Makes life to feed it, too.

Remembered sparrows—numbered hairs—
Clothed lilies—ravens fed—
Enfranchised spirits—ours and theirs,
The Living and the Dead.

Vast spheres of life—dim shades of death—
To-day and yesterday—
The vault above—the void beneath—
Hark what their voices say—

"No room for fear—no place for care
That single eye can see—
Opened by faith and purged by prayer,
And turned and fixed on THEE."

But that is not, after all, the direction of my proposed "Rave about the Rotifer." That's not a "rave" at all. "If I should intend Liverpool and land in Heaven," said John Howe in regard to crossing from

Ireland,—I intended Liverpool and got what will do me and others good for—How long?

My Liverpool was a commercial idea, but the course was devious like the voyage from Belfast. Did you ever see a Rotifer? If not, see one, and what you will notice is this, that you will not only see a Rotifer but see *through* one.

In some senses I'm a Rotifer. Some people are cuttlefish hid in a cloud of sepia. A crocodile isn't a Rotifer. Nothing less transparent, both in looks and ways, than your crocodile. Read in Baker about the shameful conduct of the crocodile to the little birds on the Atbara. But a Rotifer? You see all his machinery, you think he's a little fool. You *do* see all his machinery, but he isn't a little fool. He isn't a little fool because you see through him. The man whose life is a game at chess, and who sits like Moritz Retzsch's "Satan playing for the Soul," may call himself "deep," and it sometimes answers: something depends on the other player. There is a difference between a player in deadly earnest and one who has sat down to oblige a friend, meaning only a light tilting, while the other has couched his unblunted spear for "play," like those in Israel's day who sported by the pool in Gibeah. At a point in the devilish game the sinister eye pierces across the board with "mate in six moves" (see Wendell Holmes on this head). But to him the other (who has been partly following his soft fancies down the stream and partly keeping an eye on a trivial game)—"What's that—

eh?—in six moves—don't quite see it. Check—check—check—mate!"

However, I see I can't just now complete the discourse. In gathering matter and impetus I've overloaded the mule, as they did in Abyssinia, and he has, in the open day, rolled right over the crag and perished in the pool.

July 30.—Look out in the *Recorder* for "The Rotifer." The Editor kindly says the verses have "cheered and stirred" him, and we're going to press. The Lord make them serviceable to any poor clerk, or artist, or farmer who doesn't know what's to become of him and his missis and little Tommy and Esmeralda Hann "if this weather continues."

I have seen lately what never struck me so closely before, viz. that ventilation has been given me, as horns to bull, hoof to ass, wheel to Rotifer. I only see the full bearings now that we are upon a hill and at a distance. I began it as a theatrical clown begins his career, without any idea that he shall ever find it of account in getting a living. But the time rolls on. He's much too flighty for the brewery, and "gets the sack," after his marriage, too, to Mary the maid of the inn. And they are starving in a garret as woe-begone as Marks' "Toothache in the Middle Ages," when all of a sudden, his toothache is cured by a Thought; "I'll be a clown!" Pale Mary thinks he's gone off his head; but no. Six weeks more and the "music from the town, the murmurs of the drum and fife," are heard by the Talking Oak, and now and

then the clink of a cymbal levigated by the breeze that sinks and swells and blows "the sound of Minster bells" all round and round its "towering top." The drum and fife is the recruiting party. The music from the town is Bulwer being chaired down High Street, and the cymbal tone, the staccato, is the travelling theatre. The dreamy noise invites the dreamy poet to the fair, and there is the canvas pavilion, and Toothache with his hundred jokes, and pale Mary crushed into beauty by carmine, the tragedy Queen, whose part has been pared down to suit her limited memory, most of what the audience catch being "kyind ev-vin!" and "her babes" are in short frocks, and spangles and stomach-ache.

The tragedy is worth all the money; and yet it would never *draw* if it were not for electrified Toothache! O what spasms of effort does he make, what twinges of wit, what darting, stabbing, throbbing hits right and left, what climaxes of anguished funniness, as if the doctor must have it out at once and an end to it!

Impassive and stolid crowd! Why don't you walk up, ladies and gentlemen, walk up? Yes, here and there the clever clown singles out a bashful young man and draws attention on him, and, as it were, threatens him out of threepence. Here a round-faced, burly, white-whiskered squireen renders himself ridiculous by mounting the steps, and brings tears from the Tragedy Queen (who takes the money) by insisting on giving her five shillings for his

ticket: "No, really, Sir, the chawge is only thrippence." "Well, *that's* threepence, isn't it? Are you *blind?*"

"I've heered him say that afore," says Zachariah Clod, "let's go an' have a shy at the cocoanuts."

The ground is exhausted and must be left in fallow. No more fish in that pond; no more food for the Rotifer in *that* drop. "No wish to unpeg the pavilion, no desire to move—troublesome work moving. Huggins's people are at the next town. The villages about here don't pay—horses are hobbled—caravan wants a wheel mending; but it's no use, Mary, we *must* go. Where's the soap? I wasn't made to wear red half moons on a face of flour, was I, Mary? Wasn't a painted buffoon when *you* first knew me, was I?"

"There *is* kind people in the world, though Thomas isn't there? There's that gent as give five shillings last Thursday, and I believe it was a liking for the *ligimit drammer* as much as anything. He couldn't a' seen as we was in want of a meal's meat underneath such a good colour as I always put over it, could he? And beside, he seemed orrstruck when it come to where the bloodthirsty tyrant ketches hold o' me and says, 'Now you're mine—*mine!*' The old gentleman he outs with his pocket handkerchief and mops hisself and actilly blubbers. I see it as plain as I see our Billy amessing hisself with the coloured soap suds." (After a pause.) "Thomas, Thomas, perhaps he's the London Manager!"

"Oh dear no; no such luck."—

Of course, this is the merest tornado of fancy, making believe that there is a parallel between that case and ours.

When the working power is low, and the Severn murmurs over its pebbles, instead of rushing deep over Sabrina and her train, then matters exaggerate themselves into worse than that.

But still it is Founded in Fact.

The Squireen you will recognise; but Squireens like him are as one to a thousand. The Legitimate Drama has but a poor chance where we are, and as much depends upon Thomas Toothache, as on the Mysterious Baron and the Wronged Beauty. So we are tinkering our yellow wheel and sending out the stage carpenter to the nearest towns, and trying to find a line of migration. "What a fool you are," says the gloomy brewer, "to let anybody know." Thomas Toothache (with a slight inclination of the head), "Yes, but you see I'm a Rotifer, and not a 'Krorkindill.'"

To Mrs. M. C. TAYLOR, shortly after the death of Mr. Taylor.

Ongar, *5th August* 1868.

I have been over to Stamford Rivers, and seen Isaac Taylor's tomb and house. With reverence I thought what a pleasant thing it would have been to walk with you over this as in old days. But I must

not *incense* memory either for you or us. God is good. What He does is best. Yet a little while and we shall see it, and acquiesce with triumphant joy in the things which have tried us most. We have need of patience, but "let patience have her perfect work, that we may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

Remember that the very element which would have made it so pleasant to have borne news of Stamford Rivers was an unearthly element. This life only a "Saturday Evening." Its theory, the theory of "Another Life"; and what makes Isaac Taylor's grave (under the silent, or whispering, trees over the wall which separates it from an ample farm-stead) so well worth a pilgrimage is this, that there *is* "another and a better world," of which among infidel philosophers he was the champion, and we must not complain if in due season the other life verifies and asserts itself, and claims its population, selecting at all ages its proper subjects with a full right to

> Raise to glory all
> Who fit for glory are.

The inscription round I. T.'s tomb is "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the Great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ."

To T. A.

Bognor, *9th Aug.* 1868. Friday, 6.40 P.M.

Scene—A lane; on one side a wall seven feet high; on the other side a turnip field, a field of

wheat in sheaves, farms, and beyond, a line of silver-gray undulating Downs. Overhead a cloudless sky; several larks up in it. Birds in the coppices; and one, in particular, which sounds like drawing a cork that won't come out, but grates and squeaks. Over the wall and the hundred yards breadth of mystery to which there is "No entrance this way" is the Sea.

Coming round farther to two mushroom-headed gates, it is clear that the mystery of Laurel and Poplar is a gentleman's seat with a coach road. I scorn to inquire whose seat it is. He wants to be secluded, or he'd not build walls seven feet high round his seat, and say "No entrance this way." He shall be the "Great Unknown"; but whether short or tall, young or old, fat or thin, married or bachelor —or man at all, and not woman, spinster, or widow— all this is involved in a haze of conjecture as obscure as the age of "dateless old Hephæstus."

Nevertheless, on the other side of the mystery, and between it and another—nay, on *this* side now, for like a planet I have rounded the Poplar shades—on this side there is a cooler lane, all trees and birds. The songs in the shades of Poplar are so numerous that the entire effect is that of a simmer, or rather that of a quick *boil* of summer song. A roof of mossy barn under a huge tree, the breath of a farmyard, twelve milch kine hushed in by shelving thatch and close growing fir trees, outer doors cut into the very roof, Giles, with milk-pails over his shoulder, talking

to Jessy. A deeper lane, but trim and human; a gate open to a placid meadow, four-square and lined with fir trees; a yellow sun fast setting, and all entwined with other influence, with the pale gibbous moon, with the scent of honeysuckle; that which is both whisper and moan and wonder, the diapason of the sea.

("Where has he got to now?" says T. A.) Well, I've got a bit farther. I'm in a field. Stunted trees all lean one way from the prevailing sea-winds. There's the line of the sea itself. One sail far off; for no ships dare come within ten miles of this coast; too many sunken rocks. Now I'm on the Marge—"the beached Margent." The sea is steel-colour, the horizon is lilac, and, above the horizon, a long film of reddish-gray cloud spans all, like a flattened rainbow—a rainbow bankrupt, as it were, colour and credit gone. The gibbous moon gathers its bright night hue, as the sun goes away in the flats. Solitude, silence all, except the "enchanted moan" varying, multiplied, muffled, and complicated with shingle pebbles.

When I get free from the harness, and get time to do it, then I think of Thee, O. T. A.! I thought of thee on Wednesday evening. On Wednesday evening it rained, but a topcoat and an umbrella and a lee wall made two hours pacing to and fro possible. Now Ally and I came down here on Monday. (Mamma and the "chicks" are coming to-morrow.) The half-year was one of close labour; no breathing time, a

good deal of contest arising from money worry, happily ended last week by a sudden wave of "sale of stock" that overlapped our bills and left us beforehand with cash; so made this change, needed by us all, possible. Praise God for his goodness!

Saturday, 7.10 P.M.—Walk round town, Georgey and little Edwin with me. We hovered near the circus, pitched for the day only, and which swallows most of what Bognor has to spare of excitement or interest. There is a curious quaint pleasure in hovering round a fair or a circus. We have some Bulwer and Dickens and even some Shakespeare in us, and most legitimately. These circus men! As a matter of Art I would like to sit and smoke and make acquaintance with these "Star Artistes," these "Bare-backed Riders," these "Champion Vaulters," these "Lion Leapers," this "King of Clowns."

There is one of them lying in his human costume, chill and lonely, in the grass behind the "waterproof Pavilion," smoking his short pipe, melancholy as Jacques—

> Who was his Father?
> Who was his Mother?
> Has he a Sister?
> Has he a Brother?
> Or is there a dearer one
> Still, and a nearer one
> Yet than all other?

There is a strange family likeness in these Rovers with the paint off; a hardy look, an anxious look, as if their eye were with their heart, and that far away.

They are a mystic people; they puzzle the senses. At noon one of them was steadying himself on a throne whose royal state surpassed the wealth of Strand-Theatric-Ind, while his stately guards trembled, upright, firm as quivering rocks, in six places on the top of the caravan drawn by six piebald Arab steeds. His infant daughter drove her fairy car. All was great and grave. Nothing was wanting of Scandinavian awful Kinghood but the reality. And ere long in the bright arena, amid strains of melody, the transmigration of ideas will become more bewildering. Mr. Pickwick will stand lightly on two horses' backs, his coat and white waistcoat will vanish. Shylock will stand where Pickwick stood in the mazy ring (and what becomes of the knife and scales?) It is not Shylock, bewildered brother, it is a Mohawk Indian pursuing his deadly foe to the——. No (by the Horse powers), it is an Inca of Peru; and even while I look again, it is Mercury new lighted on a heaven-kissing hill, a shame for ladies to look at, but very pretty notwithstanding. No, no, it is none of them; it is Jacques, who lay in the cold grass and smoked his short pipe, and looked as if he saw "the Dacian mother, he their sire butchered" (as it were) to make a Bognor holiday.

Suppose T. A. and J. S. to have been Circus-sians. We might have been—T. A. would have been—"The King of Clowns," J. S. the Pantaloon or Butt, now and then soldered up into the Scandinavian king, big-bearded, be-spangled, uneasy, placed there partly for

length, partly for Quixotic gravity—partly because a tumble from his throne would matter less than in any other case. And yet, "down in the deep heart of him," as Carlyle would say, there is love for his wife —children—friends.

WHATEVER theory of life a man starts with, it will bring him into difficulties. Let a man make prudence his watchword, then you have a man like Griffiths, "a safe man." But watch his course in various directions, and you will find that he makes few friends, and that their affection for him is not enthusiastic. But let a man try the other tack; speak out all he thinks and feels, utter all his mind, not keep it in till afterwards, and he will land in another class of difficulties. He may do it not from incontinence of speech, but on some theory of Honesty or Chivalry, disdaining what is sly and selfishly considerate. He will express himself affectionately and win love, plenty of it and widely spread, but the steady-going years will run him down, if he doesn't mind. The artist is very liable to have the pleasure of life spoiled by the vast amount of love and friendship he gets, if not wisely handled. He goes into a family at the age of 20 and paints all the lot—father, mother, children and dogs and cats too. His heart flows out to all, and they swear him into eternal friendship, and give him slippers and cigars as he mounts the coach, and "he'll be *sure* to write." He is quite sad for 10 miles. He gets to new quarters, among more

fathers, mothers, children, dogs, and cats. He writes enthusiastically to the last lot, and they look for a letter every month thenceforward for life.

But the second family group draws nigh to finish. The sitters have all become endeared, and there is a new compact of mutual affection. *Two* eternal friendships, as it were. Well, a strong young man might manage two—but two dozen! two hundred! In twenty years the possibility of *evincing* his attachment is trodden down as hard as gravel. Each lot of fathers, mothers, children, dogs, and cats has only known *one* faithless artist, while the faithless artist is quite crushed with family circles.

Before, like an Abyssinian captive, I was delivered by Prince Photograph I was getting into sad messes of this sort.

To T. A.

29th October 1868.

BLESSINGS of home! Profound delights of books! What a world! I admire thee, T. A., that thou lovest a good BOOK.

A Book?—a little world—with plains and gardens, and deep solemn woods, and high mountains, and ridges, and uplands, and fallows—

> Fallows gray,
> Where the nibbling flocks do stray—

and "silver horns" above them, and arching skies above *them*, and stars above *them*. Those white Margins, too, T. A.! They? They're like silver

sands round salt sea-pools—"For marginal notes," says T. A. "For squares," says J. S. "Same thing," says T. A. "Bow wow," says J. S. Well, we won't quarrel over these quiet margins. We'll walk round and survey them by our two selves. We'll be Johnson and Savage arm in arm, hungry and poor, and out at elbows, but hopeful and ardent, and determined to "stand by our king and country." We'll be Addison and Steele, with less liquor, and not spouting "The Christian Hero" at that rate. What two won't we be? We're free. We may run and rollick round the margins, and halloo in the silence like two young Mohawks in the moonlight, and no 'Charlie' will take us up. We may linger pensive in the glades, and talk low and long, or rise high up the steeps and survey mankind from Chayney to Peru; free of the whole domains.

One of the funniest, bewilderingest, charmingest, things about a Book is that the letters keep in the same place. You may stop at the word "in," or "on," or "and," and you will find it all there when your eye roves back to the place after you've put the book by, and been all over the world, and grown gray—there it is, just where it was. It is this *petrified mind* that is so astonishing.

Wed. 6.20 p.m.—All quiet. Children gone to Sunday school "treat." Treat at home in consequence. Sir R. Walpole, comparing sketch of him in *Biog. Dict.* with the delineation of him in Macaulay's

Essays. Learn from his career not to love power too much. There is 1692 (in the marginal gallery of squares you see the fresco)—there under a tree at Eton are two boys, one sturdy, the other of the J. F. H. type of look. The sturdy boy is Bob Walpole, the slim one is "Sinjohn."

> My St. John leave all meaner things.—Pope.

It was too early for Gray to take "a distant prospect of Eton College," or he might have watched those two and sighed—

> Ah! why should they know their fate,
> Since sorrow never comes too late,
> And happiness too quickly flies?
> Thought would destroy their paradise.
> No more: where ignorance is bliss,
> 'Tis folly to be wise.

"Their fate"—*they* did not know it; *we* read their lives backward.

There is old Sir Robert Walpole, aged 69, like a beleaguered old bull, standing up boldly against everybody, you may say, except a few poor creatures that would truckle to him—his head in danger, the power just slipping from his grasp.

There is Viscount Bolingbroke, aged 36, muffled and furtive, going to offer himself to the Pretender because he, too, has lost *power* and wants it back.

There he is again, night by night his long Roman sort of visage bent over books by a lamp, writing against religion, or, as Sam Johnson said, "loading

his blunderbuss." He dare not fire it during his lifetime, but "gave half a crown to a beggarly Scotchman to fire it off after his death." All that couldn't be seen under the tree at Eton, but we can see it.

> I saw him rise, I saw the scroll complete:
> Noting, gray chronicler, the silent years.

Those lines are in H. K. White somewhere. The last is as fine as can be.[1]

MACAULAY'S *History*—state of England in 1685. What a delightful, unctuous, jolly piece of history, Vol. I.! Look at the life of the "Parson" of those days. Fancy T. A. getting up before the pudding and going into the corner to wait till called on to return thanks. Fancy his marrying none but the lady's maid at best. And then "t' Squoire" and Justice talking and acting "like a carter," only learned in heraldry. One scarcely can think it possible to have *lived* under such crushing circumstances as the man of mind must have had to endure who did not happen to be born a lord.

[1] The fragment of Kirke White alluded to is as follows:—

> Once more, and yet once more
> I give unto my harp a dark-woven lay:
> I heard the waters roar,
> I heard the flood of ages pass away.
> O thou, Stern Spirit, who dost dwell
> In thine eternal cell,
> Noting, gray chronicler, the silent years;
> I saw thee rise, I saw the scroll complete
> Thou spakest, and at thy feet
> The universe gave way.

What a change in 1867! We don't half value our privileges.

To J. F. H.

Do you know that as I live I become more and more impressed by one word, and that word is "Now." Between twilight and sunrise at Peniel Jacob went through what he could never recall. "What saidst thou, O Jacob, in that night-long contest?" Jacob could not have remembered that except in its main lines. The veerings of hope and passion and doubt and fear and intense stringent resolution passed as the rolling night clouds passed, melting into flecks and streaks of morning light.

> It is the now that makes the sinner;
> It is the now that makes the saint.

Satan has great power over the past and over the future; he has less power over the Now. He has terrified me many a time, as if to the gate of death by his power over the past, to make it lurid and terrible and inexpiable. He has made heart and flesh fail with the thought of all that lies before me. But he has far less power over the Now. Here I am more truly myself. I can dip my pen and go on writing, and he can't compel me to do nothing or to do wrong. Oh that I "could sport the oak" between the past and the future very frequently and dwell in the shrine of the present, forgetting the things that are behind as far as they cloud the great work of the Now!

. . . . . .

I find that the elixir in the hidden crystal vase down in the depths of the frame somewhere is very low after the half-year's usage, during which it has been plentiful and sparkling. When you have to begin to force yourself to paint there is something wrong. Many painters, who have not learned the great arts of revulsion, idle for weeks together and wait till the working power comes of its own accord, which it will often do with the rush of a "bore" in the Ganges some fine morning, or, more often, on some tempestuous morning when the rain streams down the pane and the wind roars in the chimney. But there is a better way than this. Change is more powerful than rest, and the art of life consists in providing a sufficiently large area of change for all possible moods, so as to husband the forces and turn the freaks of fancy to account, and, as the modern chemic science does, make the very dust and waste yield back their original riches. The art can't be had for wishing. It must be cultivated.

. . . . . .

When people have had "a good schooling" and are "genteel" and yet have no ideas and no tastes, you will notice that they keep up gentility and consideration by fine words, which mean just what plain ones mean, but which are as velvet paletots to plain broadcloth.

"And so," says the young man, "we found an excellent hostelry, and mine host gave us some delicious salmon and cucumber, and a salad com-

pounded with a great variety of ingredients, and we discussed the viands set before us with considerable relish and imbibed a quantity of the vinous fluid, etc." Actually the man thinks he has been talking to you in a refined and genteel way, whereas it is, when analysed, nothing more than the well-washed pig grunting over his trough with a more or less Latinised grunt. But Latin pigs are only pigs after all.

. . . . . .

To Mrs. STEWARD.

THERE is a small picture in the National Gallery to me very full of interest. When Raffaele was about 15 he seems to have made great progress with Perugino, and to have been "pluming his wings and meditating a flight, and thinking, so heaven help him, of immortality," like Milton, and to have had a waking vision of the Choice of Hercules sort. He represents himself as a young sleeping knight to whom Pleasure and Labour present their inducements and rewards in the midst of an Italian landscape of thin trees and light brown and blue hills. But the interesting thing is that the bit of bluish ribbed paper on which he made his design in light pen and ink strokes, now gone brown, and which he had pricked through for the purpose of tracing the design on to the panel, is framed in the same glass cabinet. He left it about, not thinking that in 350 years it would be under glass in the distant city of London, stared

at by English roughs, who would say, "Sithee Bill," he's pricked it a' through with a pin, and spilt th' ile on it!" for there are two or three of those umber-coloured blurs which come from a sketch being inadvertently put down on a palette knife.

To his Brother.

About 1849 I read Ruskin, and saw the logical and verbal force of what he said, and determined to put it to the proof, painting several pictures in the severely imitation style, and deriving much of both profit and pleasure from it. After a fair trial I saw that words and pigments are not at all the same things. As he, after fifteen years' close study of painting, found his eyes opened to the Venetians, who upset half his former theories, so I by sheer experiment saw that truth for the nineteenth century art lay between Holman Hunt's work and Titian's work; that *absolute* imitation of nature with twelve pigments is simply impossible, that there was a flaw in the logic about "resemblance to nature," that the true basis of a painting may be defined thus: "the expression of the feeling of an individual man about nature, needing some good amount of culture on the part of the observer to understand his language," and must therefore for ever be laid open to endless varieties of opinion, being in fact a Fine (aerial, attenuated, subtle, imponderable) Art. Then with much thankfulness to John Ruskin for his great services in so eloquently calling the attention of the British public to the sub-

ject, and for many wonderful fruits of his own observations of nature and pictures, I retired once again into my own lines of operation, conscious of my position, and disabused of many early dreams of perfectibility and public recognition of Art.

Said J. R., in early days, "any man with proper pains may arrive at perfectly certain judgments." But at what expense? I ask. Look at the reply. "For fifteen years I was blind to the greatest work of all, though daily and ardently engaged in close and profound study of this one thing." What of the busy puisne Judges and Barristers? What of Sir Benjamin Brodie and his followers? What of the—the *anybody*, but the son of a wealthy merchant born with "this art gift of mine," buttressed with money, emancipated by leisure, urged on by taste, and passionate desire for Turner's defence against a world of antagonists and depreciators, who had to be told by a knight on horseback that Turner was the greatest landscape painter the world ever saw. But to be *told* this is next to nothing, and the people who would not have bought a Turner in 1849 will now give £3000 for one not intrinsically worth £500, and to them no more than a Creswick would be. They know no more of Turner now than in 1849. The conclusion of near thirty years' experience and gradual disenchantment has been that no one knows the difference between a moderately good picture with no glaring errors in it, and a transcendent picture, except artists who are themselves producers.

To J. F. H.

Green Lanes, on way to Railway Station,
8th June 1868.

It is true that to spend five days over a head and three days over a broomstick handle doesn't come home to one's own purpose, though Sandys spends a week over a hand, and wisely. Nothing is more exquisite in mental process than to go about enjoying and adjusting the end to the means, and reorganising that adjustment. The Dutch painters were not poets, nor the sons of poets, but their fathers rescued a Republic from the slime and covered it with such fair farms that I declare to this day I like Dutch cheese as well as any, because it sends one in imagination to the many-uddered meadows which Cuyp has embossed in gold and silver. What savoury hares and rabbits they had in the low, blunt sandhills and how the Teniers boor snared them, and how the big-breech'd Gunn-Mann (I haven't any knowledge of Dutch, but I am sure that must be the Dutch for "sportsman") banged off his piece at them, and then how the shining Vrow saw them in the Schopp and bargained for them. The Schopp had often a window with a green curtain in it and a basso-relievo of Cupids and goats beneath, with a crack across the bas-relief, and iron stains on the marble, and a bright brass bulging bottle on the sill, and such pickling cabbage as makes the mouth water.

"Donner and Blitzen!" says Gerhard Dow in

passing, "Pots-tausen! but I will baint that Fraulein," and the vine leaves gave a conscious flutter.

If Art is to be really good there must not only be the basis of poetry but the basis of true representation.

This requires prodigious *labour*, and as (they say) you must have races to develop horse power, so in each direction of science or art, some must carry a given principle to the utmost, and so yield their contribution to the world's progress. Here is a young painter impatient because his great picture of "Ulysses pottering in Nausicaa's washtub" takes him a whole month. Let him go to be cured at S. Kensington. Let him realise the studio of Mieris, Ostade, or Gerhard Dow. Let him see what reverent conceptions of a carrot one of these men entertained, and what it took to realise them. Nothing but an almost religious estimate of *soup* could have buoyed them up. You may say so, but that was not all. Look at Ostade's "Physick." Here you have a wise leech peering through the ruby texture of the globular bottle in his hand held against the light, you have "simples" drying on the wall, and tomes open on the table, and severe, long superseded instruments on the sill.

No. They were thoughtful men. It was not all Art plus Gastronomy. It was not Gastronomy that let us in among the sheds and shealings of Teniers, with the venerable boors at labour and the barn door fowls scratching among the chaff. Art is not the *moulder* of a nation's life and sentiment: it is its

expression. So the trumpeters of Terburg, the solemn dances on the wax'd oak floors of sunny interiors by De Hooghe, and his bowlings on the lawn, the cud-chewing, tufted yellow banks of Cuyp with screens of silver cloud above the windmills, the clash and burly chatter of the night guard, with heroic, light-haired captains in buff of Rembrandt, and his school: these render back the rich Republic in a way in which men might realise it, if they cared to do so, with an accuracy equal to contemporaneousness, as far as aspect is concerned.

Thank you, Jan Van Huysum!

Thank you, Mr. Thomas Hope!

Thank you, Albert the Good!

Thank you, curators of the S. K. Museum!

Thank you all, gentlemen, with all my heart! As to you, dear old Jan Van Huysum, you have edified me beyond expression. You teach me that a man can't be too careful as to his work, be it what it may. That if a picture takes as long to build as a house, and is as valuable, it is proper to take as varied pains over it, carving timber and stone, and having all manner of ledgers and day-books and wage-books and little wooden houses on wheels with "OFFICE" over the door.

Mr. Slapdash whips out his pocket-book, scribbles for five minutes on one page, and from that memorandum paints with the aid of the depths of his consciousness the whole of his picture. Not so the true follower of Gerhard Dow and Jan Van Huysum.

To him the silent surface with the "white ground" is a sacred place that is to tell on after ages, and bring pleasure or power or knowledge to hundreds of thousands as silently. No eyes, emperor's or clown's, telling the other that they have been there. It is worth this man's while to spend a whole sketch-book, if need be, over one twelve-inch panel.

Jan Van Huysum, your pearly dewdrops on the fresh gathered cool green things of the earth refresh me. Your tiny ants on the petals of the pink teach me in their minute completion to be like the star, "Ohne Hast, Ohne Rast." How cool and calm and cheerful and confident you are, Jan!

A writer in the *Daily Telegraph*, reviewing Holman Hunt's "Isabella and the Pot of Basil," compares him to Gerhard Dow. "He is Gerhard Dow *en grand.*" That's all very well, but he pours contempt on "the little rubbishing Dutchmen" who were not as good as Gerhard Dow, and names Mieris. That is a hateful style of criticism. For the sake of carrying your point you abuse those who work in an opposite direction. "Shame, shame, turn him out—put him under the pump!"

I mean the critic, not the man he abuses. When a boy I remember the entrancement of the Biographies of Painters in the *London Encyclopædia* as I lay on my father's study floor, aged 11, reading them. The *Arabian Nights Entertainments* were nothing to them. How Van Huysum would never let anybody into his studio, and guarded against dust with dragon watch-

fulness, and made his own colours and brushes because none were good enough; and how the pictures with white grounds were most prized, and how only the men of enormous wealth could get them.

All about G. Dow and Mieris and Ostade and Teniers and Rembrandt. What a charm! More than the rainbow in the very sound and sight of their names. "And are there any of these matchless works in England?" Yes, to be sure; the great Dutch merchants, the Hope family, have some of their choicest works. "But I shall never see them unless, perhaps, *I* become a great painter and go to London." This was long ago, and long ago.

But now, in the Magic Halls which belong to you and me as much as to Queen Victoria, the Prince and Princess of Wales, and all the Royal Family—in the South Kensington Museum yesterday I found myself hanging enraptured over these *very things*. What eyes have gazed at those two Van Huysums since he finished that flourishing name and date, done as a writing-master might chisel it in marble, and drew the curtain and let the burgomaster in to have the first sight of the marvel and hear him offer his 1500 guilders for it! How little the crowds that move past those pictures know what they are looking at, and what a *stir* each of those canvases has made in the clean Dutch Republic and in the saloons of England ever since the days of Charles the Second! As little do they see the embalming of human thought and labour.

To the stuffy old white-waistcoated squire with the gold eyeglass, port-wine face, loud voice, and air which implies that Mulberry Park is the centre of all things, visible and invisible—to him a flowerpiece is a flowerpiece. "Pretty flowerpiece that, eh?" Jan Van Huysum's heart "hears it and beats though it's earth in an earthly bed." To him (the old squire of Mulberry Park) and to the obstinate-headed man of words and thoughts-in-words, who believes that thought divorced from words is homeless—to these all pictures are as like "as my fingers are to my fingers" (one of the silliest sayings I ever saw in a sensible article where that topic was introduced).

"Pretty flowerpiece that!" He comes round to the other 1500 guilder picture and says, "Ha! I see! Yes! another *flower*piece!" and passes on to the Ostade.

His "faculty" is not equal to the occasion. Now suppose that things pleased only as long as they are *new*. Grant it, for it is true. Then comes the question, How long is a given entity "new"? The power of evolution is one thing and the matter evolved is another. Kingsley picks up the pebble, and to him it is enough for an eloquent lecture. "O yes," says Squire Mulberry, "your man of genius (with a sneer as if it meant 'stable boy') can make sunshine out of cucumbers." *That's* true, Squire, but it is not a case in point. The pebble was too much for Kingsley, though too little for the squire.

I shall here refer to one of Mr. Spouter's [his own]

poetical effusions written in the year 1850, in which the same thought is touched on—

> The full-orbed mysteries of the sky,
> Which here in glittering fragments lie,
> And all our baby wonderings try ;
>
> While now with glee, and now with dread,
> In small experiment we tread
> Among the living and the dead.
>
> Peering into the daisy's crown
> Until its wonders deep have grown
> *A mighty gulf to drink us down.*

Let us "hark back." How long is a given entity new? That depends on what is in *it* as well as what is in the observer. That Van Huysum! The husky "pretty-pret-ty" of Squire Mulberry dies along the Museum distances, and we can stoop over the rail and poke our nose to within two inches of the picture (closely watched though by X55, and creating a transit in the keeper's motions; X55 and the keeper narrowly looking for the pin or penknife which is going to Fenianise the colours that began to bloom among the Amsterdam tulips before the last century was born). What is *in* it? Why, there's a *dewdrop* in it. That's a novelty and will please little children for 1 minute 30 seconds and 12 parts of a second. See how the light strikes it! See how it is just going to roll off! See how the green of the leaf is reflected on the under side of it! That dewdrop was not done with a *brush*; now *was* it? It couldn't be. (X55 and the keeper exchange looks and walk yards asunder,

one to his perpendicular reverie on Mary Hann, the other to his melancholy nail-paring and tender wonder what there will be for dinner.)

There was a day when Jan Van Huysum said (it was a cool summer morning about 9.30 A.M.), "I think I will put a dewdrop there. Gretchen!" (at the top of the stairs) "Gretchen, go and gather me a brocoli leaf out of the shade with the dew on it, and mind and don't shake it, and tell your missis I can't go out with her, shopping, this morning." He met Gretchen at the door—for none must enter that still studio—and then—then it's all a mystery, for no one ever saw how Jan Van Huysum *did* it. (X55 is attracted by the talk, and stands close by, hands in white gloves crossed as on drill, head on one side, smile of deprecation and interest, twisting mouth and eye.) "But you don't mean to say that you're going to clap on a *Novelty Scale*, with such an observation as that as the unit? Don't I though! If Squire Mulberry looks at one picture and calls it a "flower piece," and at another picture and calls it a "cow piece," and passes on, all I can say is that his universe is in a nutshell. (I strongly suspect that at any rate it is in a globe a *little* larger, the north pole lying level with his elbow and the south a little above the os coccygis.)

I've not the least objection to cede the question. I'm a *baby*, and am *only* pleased with what is new. There! will that do? Sir Isaac Newton went so far as to say he was an infant (was it infant or child?) on

the sea-shore, etc. Let's have it out. Let's go the whole baby—

> Here dear,
> Little one,
> Go slow,
> Do not run—

and don't think it a slur merely on secular things that they must be "new" if they are to please. The sweet poet of *The Christian Year* knew better :—

> *New* mercies each returning day
> Hover around us while we pray,
> *New* perils past, *new* sins forgiven,
> *New* thoughts of God, *new* hopes of heaven.

And don't think that Keble was the first to perceive this, for

> His mercies are *new* every morning and repeated every evening.

I can only compare these fruitful writing moods to a fen full of wild ducks, widgeon, and teal, winging and clanging till you bring them down. One could wish them to be turned to account somehow, yet my ducks and teal die if I try to domesticate them.

THERE are many forms of conceit. There is the conceit of empty and light-minded men, which is flighty and irritable, and the conceit of the serious and able man which is calm and deep. When Malvolio parades the garden "practising behaviour to

his own shadow," in his ridiculous yellow stockings and cross garters, we laugh at him for a fool. "I thank thee, I will smile," he says, and he smiles ineffable self-approval. Yet if we collate his whole character we see that he was no fool. He "thinks nobly of the soul." He knows the doctrine of Pythagoras. He is shocked at all misbehaviour. He is a "full solemn man." We see our Malvolios now and then, some trifling local dignity will develop them. The hat brim becomes broader, the coat longer tailed, the yellow stockings and cross garters are translated into the modern equivalents. The head goes insensibly on to the tilt, the mouth is pursed into a point of distance, or expands into a smile of toleration or condescendency. His shadow has not grown less, but larger, according to the Eastern good wish, and he begins to practise behaviour to it. Very ridiculous behaviour it is, but the last man to see it, or be conscious of it, is Malvolio.

To R. S.

What is true of the body is true also of the soul. The laws of God are to the moral powers what the laws of nature (so called) are to the physical powers. Obedience to the laws of nature preserves the bloom and life of the body; obedience to the law of God preserves the bloom of the soul.

"In all these things is the life of thy spirit." Moral death, ever enlarging itself, is as inevitable upon a course of sin as speedy mortality upon a

course of vice. When sin enters it brings forth abundantly after its kind, and death is not so much its arbitrary award as its inevitable procreation.

To C. M.

No doubt sin is a great evil—the greatest evil—*the* evil. But its treatment is a thing which only the "good and kind Physician" knows. I read a sermon by Archbishop Manning on "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me;" very eloquent and fine, but as different from the sweet gospel voice "singing in silence" as the lurid flaming of Sinai from the soft light which shone on Peter's face from the sepulchre of his wronged and risen Saviour. With this school of theologians there is no doubt a strong sense of the *evil* of sin. But it is like the sense of sin which the lost have in its fulness: Merlin, with his hand on his aching heart, pacing for ever in enchanted forests, crushed and haunted and vexed for ever by dim unappeasable foreshadowings of doom—whispers of the inexpiable, the irretrievable, the gone, the lost, the harvest past, the summer ended, the sin to be dragged slowly out by years of torturing fear and pain and penance, the sum of which is to be "carried over" into "doleful shades" of Purgatory. This is the mere enchanter's gospel. Ah, how different from the gospel of our Lord and Saviour.

I have had enough of the presentment of sin, enough of the miserable wandering in the mazes of the dark woods of moral metaphysics, enough of the

terrible unrolling of the scrolls of doom. But I do thank God that you and I have been saved from the clutches of these darkeners of God's counsel who, with temptations like ours, and consciences awake and starting like ours, would have clawed and rolled us as we might imagine a wild solemn-eyed Sphinx might have smitten down and terrified a wanderer in Egyptian deserts, laying her huge paw on his chest, and gazing awfully into his eyes till reason failed and death relieved him from the incubus.

How different are the voices we love, like the charming voices of children singing "Hosanna! Peace on earth, goodwill to men!" Angel voices, sweet and swift!

> See all your sins on Jesus laid!
> The Lamb of God was slain;
> His soul was once an offering made
> For every soul of man.

Analyse your sins? No, nail them to the Cross. Weep tears of blood, sweat drops of oozing agony in secret chambers, in lonely walks? Oh no—

> Jesus my salvation is;
> Hence my doubts, away my fears;
> Jesus is become my peace.
> Happy soul who sees the day,
> The glad day of gospel grace!
> Thee my Lord (thou then wilt say),
> Thee will I for ever praise.

To T. A.

August 1868.

Two of my boys and myself have been for a fortnight to Shelley, near Ongar, to visit Mrs. Steward. The influences of the country were very soothing—fields, fields, fields, beautiful brooks with flag and water-lily and rush and water-flowers in abundance, and indoors good books and good talk in abundance; the only objection to the talk being its suggestiveness and excitements. One wants to mump and muse in holidays and talk to clods and pikestaves. There's no need of excitements; life never drags, is never dull. The only difficulty is to fetch out of the fragrant clods of the valley the steaming strength of nerve and muscle which gives fuel to thought and labour. I had to write for three weeks when the painting power had dropped off merely to find employment for the unharnessed faculties, and even then it was not easy to repress the clamorous thoughts which wanted to be back at the easel and fumed and fretted not a little.

And I feel how humble it becomes me to be, in the thought that all my planning and contriving may come to naught. Yet what can any man do but use his reason and will and working power to the utmost and then be content to "leave it"? I wish I could be content to see the possible result of *utter* failure. Who am I that I should escape the lot of many a better man? How many, especially in the arts, have actually been beaten by the insuperable necessities of

their position. Wordsworth dreaded this. (See his poem on "Resolution and Independence," or something of that sort.)

> I thought of Chatterton, the marvellous boy,
> The sleepless soul that perished in his pride;
> Of him who walked in glory and in joy,
> Following his plough along the mountain side.
> By our own spirits we are deified.
> We poets in our youth begin in gladness,
> But thereof come in the end despondency and madness,

etc., and got cured by the firm-mindedness of an old leech-gatherer on a lonely moor.

This is what one would like, not to bargain with Providence that there shall be success, but to learn to be content to bear what so many have to bear, and do bear manfully.

It is a great help, nevertheless, to know when you are really at your post — a great help even in prospect of defeat. Now I know that whether it be bailiffs or ill-health or disablement or death itself, it is my business to finish the work in hand to the best of my ability, and that if this won't do nothing will.

I used to think that "fortification," etching, or other possibilities might, if I only bestirred myself, carry us clear of the risks of painting. I *tried* them faithfully and long. I see they won't. It's no use "taking on" and wishing I had taken some other trade. I've no more doubt about being in my right place than you have.

And it's no use looking to this or that individual quarter. It isn't a friend or two that can undertake

to prop you up on and on. This increases the need of patience, and Satan would like to put you out of temper, like that man in Samaria who was trodden down when the plenty came. The Lord has all sorts of windows. I didn't see our way to any holiday this summer, but here's Mrs. Steward invites us for a fortnight, and his uncle sends for Johnny, and another friend sends for Ally into Warwickshire, all unrequested. So if there are not windows, there are pigeon holes, and we mustn't cry out before we are hurt. Dinner ready.

12*th August.*

Painting power beginning to tap at window and be up to his tricks, but won't come in, like Master Slender—

"Come, gentle Master Slender, come, we stay for you."

Sl. "I'll eat nothing, I thank you, sir," etc.

Much encouraged this morning by a letter from Shields. Agnew bought a ten-inch study of mine not long since. Shields called to inquire if it had sold. "Yes, readily." Very thankful. If that class of work (viz. the scriptural) goes "readily," then that is where I am furnished for a hundred years to come, and that is what I should best love to do, and to do in that medium way; not ambitiously, *à la* Holman Hunt, not in shadowy indication, *à la* Blake, but with solid finish of the broad sort, and say sixteen inches long in panel, so that a week would suffice to realise an idea.

DON'T you remember—for your life is pretty well running abreast of mine—(and may we reach the "blest shore" in due season!)—that just when you were shedding your mere youth and entering on the golden age in which most men begin, if ever, to *make* themselves, there appeared what was considered a starry group of poets, soon, and most unfairly, obscured as "the spasmodic school"? Professor Aytoun it was who did it; and the chief men of the little cluster were Alexander Smith and Sydney Dobell. Mind you, I can't say that I was ever carried at all off my feet by them. I was too early sealed to Milton, Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Keats, Tennyson, and the older poets, Chaucer, Spenser, and others, readily to admit more into the warerooms. So not having hoorayed for them, I had not the shame of being a renegade and guffawing when Aytoun sneered and laughed. It was probably just so with you. Therefore we can the more tenderly recognise and enjoy the full meaning of these *Last Leaves* of Alexander Smith and the memoir attached by P. P. Alexander. The Memoir is instructive. Alexander Smith was a fine fellow. It is written with a smell of Carlyle about it, and of all odours none is so like stinking fish in all literature where it does not come from the blubber of the huge whale himself — the great Gothic whale lumbering and floundering in the Northern Seas, and spouting his "foam fountains" under the crackling Aurora and the piercing Hyperborean stars. The *Last Leaves* are

good essay-writing, and the essay on "Essayists" is worth reading. The essay on "Sydney Dobell" is touching as a gentle attempt to reply after long silence, and when Aytoun mists had exhaled, to the sneer about "Spasmodic." I used to dislike the "Festus" and "Balder" tone considerably, and the only book I ever flung to the other side of the room was "Festus." I never could get far enough into Dobell to come across his real merits, but I declare, in its way, I know nothing so fine as the ballad that A. Smith quotes here. It is of the supremest order in that line. In music, in acute suggestiveness, in unearthliness of imagery and humanity of sentiment. I really couldn't match it in the same space by any quotation. Here, I'll write it for thee, and thou canst read it thy best for thy friends, only mind that nobody needs to come in with the coal scuttle, or "wants missis if you please." Twilight would be best, coming home from a picnic, when you can only half see to read, but fill up with memory.

KEITH OF RAVELSTON.

The murmur of the mourning ghost
  That keeps the shadowy kine.
O Keith of Ravelston,
  The sorrows of thy line!

Ravelston, Ravelston,
  The merry path that leads
Down the golden morning hill,
  And through the silver meads.

Ravelston, Ravelston,
The stile beneath the tree,
The maid that kept her mother's kine,
The song that sang she!

She sang her song, she kept her kine,
She sat beneath the thorn,
When Andrew Keith of Ravelston,
Rode through, the Monday morn.

His henchmen sing, his hawk-bells ring,
His belted jewels shine.
O Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!

I lay my hand upon the stile,
The stile is lone and cold,
The burnie that goes babbling by
Says nought that can be told.

Yet, stranger, here from year to year,
She keeps her shadowy kine.
O Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!

Step out three steps where Andrew stood;
Why blanch thy cheeks for fear?
The ancient stile is not alone,
'Tis not the burn I hear!

She makes her immemorial moan,
She keeps her shadowy kine.
O Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!

I call it very lovely, and gathering steadily, as he was doing strength during another twenty years, who knows what a strong author and poet he might have become!

But what matter, there are books enough, more than enough. Men need to use what there is. Yet, like coral insects, we must work and die, and leave our tiny bone to build the rising reef on which the palm groves are to flourish in ages how far away!

The twilight is dimming my paper, and the calm of the "Saturday Evening" is gathering and deepening. What we wish for the Alexander Smiths—the poets and the prose writers—is that they should not only leave their inevitable *modicum* imbedded in the reef, but that they should find a happy place of their own in the eternal "fitness of things."

The following was written a few days afterwards:—

JUST as my beginning to you about the Rotifer led further than I thought, so these reflections led me to take out half a quire of paper and begin a sort of essay review on Alexander Smith's *Last Leaves*. I've been running on the spring-board for a month, and have ventured to leap at last. Most probably, therefore, no more ventilation, except through the press, for nobody knows how long.

It was at this time the article on Alexander Smith published in the London *Quarterly Review*, already mentioned, was written. It was immediately followed by the one on Blake. He afterwards received the following letter from D. G. Rossetti on the subject of the essay.

PENKILL, 27*th October* 1868.

MY DEAR SMETHAM.—The *L. Q. R.* arrived yesterday, and I read your article aloud, which gave us all a great deal of pleasure. It is full of real stuff in every paragraph (by the

bye, it is a pity the paragraphing and punctuation are not better; this I suppose is the printer's fault), and is as just in criticism as it is excellent in style and rich in imagery. I was specially delighted with what you say about Dobell's "Keith of Ravelston," not only because you have so flatteringly lugged in my name in connection with it, but because I have always regarded that poem as being one of the finest of its length by any modern poet—ranking with Keats's "La Belle Dame sans Merci," and the other masterpieces of the condensed and hinted order so dear to imaginative minds. What a pity it is that Dobell generally insists on being so long winded when he can write like that! There is a snatch of sea song (about the *Betsy Jane*) in "Balder" which is fifty times as good as anything in Dibdin, who is nevertheless not contemptible.

Our circle here, though small, is a highly appreciative one, and I assure you you could not have been in better hands. Our ladies are Miss Boyd and a charming old lady, an aunt of hers who (as I thought in reading) exactly realises what you say of old age in your review, and who has a great love of poetry.

The weather begins to break up here now, and I shall be soon returning to town to see what I can do towards work—not very hopeful, I am sorry to say.

. . . . . .

Affectionately yours—D. G. R.

To J. F. H.

Luke XII.—"Bemerton Church! Ah! See how the swallow darts in and out of the rafters! Hear how the bee hums in and out of the casement! How sweet that blowing breeze! How cool that ancient marble! How peaceful that little storied urn—that animated bust—(well, I don't know, he looks a *flat*, but let that pass), and those few simple good folk! Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so——"

George Herbert (with a *look*). "I have observed,

my friends—pardon me that on this occasion I do not at once proceed to divide the bread of life—that it is one part of a minister's duty to bring, by such simple arts as he may possess, the minds of his hearers to a posture of reverence and receptiveness. The work of the Sanctum Sanctorum, the Holy of Holies, is sweet and deep. There is, nevertheless, needful to it a prior labouring of the soul, something *superliminare*, some pausing on the threshold, some preparations of the heart, that the answer of the tongue may not be empty and vain; or our minds will be as that swallow, drifting over our heads; as that bee, humming half in, half out of the Holy Temple; as that breeze, passing no-whither and is in danger of being insensate to the words of Truth; as that cold marble vase and burial urn, or that bust which hath indeed the features of a man, but is not informed with a living soul."

Luke xii.—Here George Herbert, glimmering out of the Past for a moment, melts into the blue air, and the ripples of the beech and ash recall me to the page with which I began. "The old is better." Yes, these squares were enclosed seven years ago, perhaps; and that little one three-quarters of an inch long—I don't remember when it was first made, as the thought, contained in it, tolled like a bell high up in the starry midnight of Thought. It was rude at first; the merest germ. A line now, a line then, have made it more and more distinct. But still it is rude and obscure to the outer eye; to the inner

eye (which is "the bliss of solitude") it represents a close farm-yard, and a bordering wheat field over which the twilight is "falling brown," and "some one pacing there alone." What is this? and who is he? I know him well. In a hundred even-falls he has rebuked me when "the cares of this life," if not "the deceitfulness of riches," crowded round me to choke the good seed and render it unfruitful. When I was inclined to murmur at my lot—to make haste to get rich, to let the lusts of other things entering in displace the life of God, I felt—and as I, pausing for a word even now, shade a very little in between the darkening barns where there is laid up much goods for many years—I feel as if the square were a Holy Thing, a solemn and sad thing; for as a living voice to me is the voice of that man in the twilight, like a late bird chirruping: "Soul, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry;" because I know he is singing his death-song, and that he will come no more to the haunts where he has worn out and expended the life of his spirit.

But above it is another, and over *it* the word "Consider,"—a figure stooping reverently over a tall lily (to my eye all graceful and finished as if Jan Van Huysum had lent his pencil in his secret studio, bringing it me finished as by miracle—though a scribble of pen and ink to the Miss who has "learned drawing under the most eminent professors": Professor Jones to wit, who was greatest in poonah painting, and Professor Robbins, whose

greatest maxim was "to put the lights and shades and colours in their right places"). And above that a little bird on a spray, "not forgotten before God;" and then a head—shown in the back view because the point of the record is that "the very hairs of your head are all numbered." And then a single hair, and then the section of a hair, and then, above that, a square with the rude sketch of the wheel of a Rotifer. (That awful sight I saw one day in Mr. Budgett's microscope has haunted me ever since. I see it now! Those transparent ciliæ whirling round and round and making an infinitesimal vortex; each mysterious spoke, no doubt, as hollow and organic as that tubular hair, which to the spoke-tube would be as huge as the large main drainage pipes to the leaden pipe from our cistern. And the spoke-tube, no doubt, as large relatively to other tubes in the microcosm as the cistern pipe to the hollow hair.) Then a bit of the Atlantic Cable lying in the ooze and bottom of the sea among the forms of life brought up by lines of endless fathom in a bit of sludge sent to W. K. Parker, the greatest and profoundest fathomer of the unfathomed life of the deep's unknown, who under *his* microscope (received from the Microscopical Society itself, because he could see farther than any of them, and was the best boy of the lot) resolves that sludge in glittering rows — imbedded in lines and blots of Gum or Canada Balsam—glittering rows of the most bewitching shells, who "never expected the gentle-

man to look at them" from above, with bigger than Brobdignag eyes, but were content in the un-"turbulent profound" to pass away their days of love beyond ken, love possibly as strong as that which swells in the bosom of a—whale.

To Mrs. TAYLOR.

I can conceive no greater mingling of spiritual and intellectual blessedness than to have at length the whole letter and meaning of the Bible transferred beyond the encumbering machinery of study into the substance of the mind itself, for the purpose of meditation and use. Some portions of the Word attain this lodgment early. The parable of the Prodigal Son, for instance, may be said to have thus fixed itself in all Christian minds. Indeed, most of Christ's parables are so fixed. Well, to have the Epistles dwelling there as clearly and orderly, with as distinct detail and as ready generalisation, would be unspeakably pleasant, and in course of time it may be done. The Philippian Church ought to be as distinct as a Methodist Circuit. Philemon is circuit steward at Colosse, Epaphros is the "Super," Onesimus is a Class Leader; there "a faithful and beloved brother," though at one time he was only so so. Euodias and Syntyche at Philippi did not get on well together, like some folks at Stoke Newington and elsewhere.

The plan I am at present following is this: The Philippians I have thus gone through, first squaring

the substance of it, then reading through Alford, Wesley, Clarke, Howson, and Conybeare, and the Horæ Paulinæ; I get through a commentary on an Epistle like winking when once the squares are made; for a jotted word or added square gives it all a perfect vital relation. Then I add the various readings, the important words in the original, all forms of generalisation, so as to get big "scopes" and little "scopes"; lateral "scopes" and the other sort; so that at last the thing is transferred bodily out of the book into the mind, and "all the building rises fair," just like a translucent house of crystal, where you see all through it at a glance—a house of light with no corner dark, and the pillars and grounds of the Truth firm and soaring and opalescent all at once.

As to Studio work, the large landscape of "Hesper" is in a manner done, and is laid by to get mellow, and wait for "toning," etc. Since then I have been at work on the "Shadow of the Cross," and have got over the hill-summit in respect to it, having, as I think and my friends think, mastered the real difficulty of the picture, which is the central face.

To C. M.

If a painter, having made a good design and got it to look finished as a picture, will then mentally convey himself into one of those remote Chinese villages where all the long days and evenings a Chinese artist constructs the "laborious orient ivory,

sphere in sphere," learning that same continuance in welldoing, and not beginning a new thing till the old is finished, he will take a new sort of delight, and his work can scarcely fail to be valuable in one way or another. Most failures lie in not going on long enough.

I heard a man in a meeting in the country long ago, say that one of the most encouraging verses he knew was a verse of common metre to this effect—

Go on, go on, go on, go on, etc.

It is one of the signs of the true connoisseur not to talk much in the presence of pictures. The gabble and fribble, the shallow exclamations of delight, and the presumptuous hasty censure of the R.A. crowd, who come more to be seen than to see, mark out the persons to whom pictures are like bracelets and bugles more than like Sibylline books. One of the finest expressions we ever see on a human face is that with which a good judge of painting looks at a picture. Reynolds on one occasion was painting the portrait of such an one. The sitter would keep turning his head to look at a picture on the wall, and the look and posture were so fine that Sir Joshua took a new canvas and began a new portrait.

Sir Joshua, when West had painted the "Death of General Wolfe," and had ventured to clothe his heroes in the dress they actually wore, sat before the work for a whole half-hour and spoke never a word. And then flowed the oracular sentence,

"West has conquered, this picture will create a revolution in art."

I don't know whether it is wholly a benefit or a hindrance that ventilation has to be chiefly confined to fighting *my own* battle. I am so full of interest in other things, characters, people, events, books—all sorts of things. Yet the genius of ventilation rebukes me if I wander far from the battle of life to-day. It has to be fought either in cloudy thought or by the tongue, or at the point of the pen; and the last is far the mightiest — mightier than the sword. In the long run, truly, it touches most of the great human subjects of interest, because man is a microcosm and his life "an image of the mighty world." "If I have told you of earthly things," how that I am meek and lowly of heart, that my kingdom is not of this world, that a lily is arrayed more gloriously than Solomon, that what men prize and strive for is precisely what is worthless, that covetousness is idolatry, that content is true riches, that care is curse, that predominance is slavery, that pride is meanness, that it is more blessed to give than to receive,—and ye believe not; how can ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?—of mysteries of Divine manifestation, of heavenly repose and oneness with the Father, of the "quiet seats above the thunder" in undying bliss, of the rapturous and seraphic affections of finished love, of the perpetuity of joy and the pleasure for evermore?

To Mrs. TAYLOR he writes as follows concerning the progress of his painting :—

4th March 1869.

I AM now at the last stage of the "Hymn of the Last Supper," where no single day's work, however laborious, would be apparent to a strange eye, though thousands of minute touches are added ; but the accretion of these subtleties makes the work very different in time. The tension of the faculties required in the carrying fully out of such a picture is more than could be told. For you to know every touch, so that you lose all sense of freshness and are liable to think your picture too dark, too light, too strong in colour, not strong enough, twenty times a day, and have to bridle yourself in, and reason from point to point, screwing along as if you were going to take Magdala. Yet it is delightful toil, and the love of toil grows on you. I hope when this is done, which will be in another fortnight, if all is well, to go on with the "Shadow of the Cross," which is advanced since you saw it.

The only other pursuits in the way of study I allow myself are the Odes of Horace, which I go over in all sorts of ways, endlessly, hoping ere long to be quite at home in them as Latin poetry, and the Epistle to the Romans in the Greek, which I treat in the same way. In these two I have set up my (intellectual) rest for perhaps a year or two. I mean to leave neither till I know them as well as I know the multiplication table (which I *do* know up to 12 times 12).

I know you will like this detail of my work better than general news, not to say that I don't know about anything else but (1) my picture; (2) Horace; (3) the Romans. And inquiries on these three heads will command my best attention.

. . . . . .

To the Same.

8th April.

On the evening before Good Friday, *i.e.* on the evening of the Last Supper, as we commemorate it, I got "The Hymn" finished; but without at all trying to complete it by then. I was rather pleased at the coincidence. On the Saturday morning Mr. J. S. Budgett came and offered me my price (300 gs.) for it. Since then it has been in Rossetti's studio for a week, where it was seen a good deal and proved a complete success. One who saw it was G. F. Watts, one of the "Hangers" at the R.A. this year. I must tell you the summary of his opinion as reported by R.—"It must be called a great picture though it is a small one." On Tuesday I went to see Watts myself. He confirmed the words spoken to Rossetti, and promised to serve me in any way he could.

To W. D.

Bognor, *4th August.*

Just had a bathe in the Sea—the Sea, the open Sea, the blue, the fresh, the ever free.

The little joys of life give more satisfaction than

one would think. You recollect at supper time that you "got your hair cut to-day"; too long delayed, but done at last. What a serenity steals over you as you sit down to supper! You give your razor and knife to a grinder, and to-morrow morning what a delight it is to find that your razor *cuts*. You cut your pencil, and for a week you feel like a free man as you handle your penknife.

Got Hawthorne's Notes. His minute notice of small incidents suggests what a blessing it is to be able to sketch. There are points in N. Hawthorne I can well understand (the same in Landor), viz. the being the slave of impression at certain times. It is a hindrance in some directions, a strength in others. It made N. H. *silent*, and W. S. L. *furious*, the only two avenues of relief. But the first is safe, the second dangerous.

I like the description of N. H. sitting all the evening, and never saying anything but taking in every little fact.

Your habitual talker may have a Johnsonian amplitude of diction, and get into certain ruts and formulæ which will look like extempore power—just as in speech-makers you may find out where the "It has struck me, Mr. Chairman" soon merges into the MS. But where a subtle fancy and acute taste, and strong feeling blend, as in N. H., it stops the clapper, and his *talk* is as prosaic and ordinary as N. H.'s account of Rydal and Grasmere, which any one who has been there sees is just like a school-girl's journal—

except that he sees "the new moon over his right shoulder," which was a revengeful touch of his *genius*.

I'm often inclined to burst out in mere enjoyment of squaring. What it has become after twenty-two years—but perhaps it is useless. No new principle has been developed this ten years. It is the wondrous combination, the startling or soothing chords, or its diapason, which brings such exquisite delight. For example, every walk is "squared," and these things that N. H. notes in words are put in much more efficiently in form. Here is a twilight walk, and by inflections of slight shading I can record the sentiment "andante," "con spirito," the very time and tune, as in music. In fact, in addition to its veraciousness of fact, it has become musical, so that there be bass squares and treble squares, and all sorts of echoing influences, humming as in the Isle of Prospero round the simple facts of life, none of which (within certain analysed limits) are too trivial to record. So that I live close to my kind habitually.

It has all grown insensibly, as all sorts of scented and curious things grow under the oaks of the dim unfathomed forest.

I delight in W. S. Landor's theory of Proportion, and how there ought to be a place for every ornament, solid and full of relation.

> Unity, mystery, majesty, grace,
> Stone upon stone and each stone in its place.

The thing that honest Old Time shows us is that if

your temple be large it must be *bare*, if it be finished and elegant it must be *small*.

To T. A.

Bognor, Wednesday, 12.15 P.M.

As I write there pass coaches and four, half a dozen of them (one with postilions in blue), going to Goodwood races. [Here is an illustration.]

That is a "swell young man" with a horn, the Honourable Somebody, no doubt. Coaches clean, not dusty, as when we saw them return last evening; dresses clean and stylish; horses spanking and skittish. The drivers are swells: some young swells, others old swells, with white reins. As they pass the Hon. Mr. Hornblower sees me standing at the toy shop door, and he thinks to himself—seeing one whom nature marked out for an aristocrat, but who is reduced to a perambulator and two little children to take care of at a toy shop door—"How that fellow envies us! How he wishes he were going to Goodwood, poor devil! I'll treat him to a taste of my horn"—and so he holds it straight out, and makes it say, Tootle-tootle-too-oo-oo-oo-oo! which was very kind of him, and may he never want a horn to blow, and an elegant middle-aged party standing at a toy shop door to admire him. What the angels who excel in strength think of him and the Goodwood races, and all that system of things of which the four-horsed coaches form a part, is another thing entirely.

In the twilight last evening, walking on the

promenade, I heard a trumpet and a viol, and looking across, saw windows open and a party of a dozen seated at dinner, attended by near a dozen liveried servants: white cravat, spotless linen, black dress, faces fresh and glowing, hair crisp and wavy and nicely parted, and brushed smoothly and clingingly to the smooth forehead. Every face, whether it were a fat face like Monsieur Jullien's, or an Apollonic face like Byron's, was what we understand by an aristocratic face—not disturbed by cares of the petty and common kind, with a manner properly and gently restrained.

How this dozen got over the hours between 9.30 P.M. and this morning I don't know; but here they are again, fresh as out of bandboxes, and imagination follows them to Goodwood, and sees the phenomena of the racecourse, and their return, not so dusty to-day as yesterday, for it rained this morning—sees the Wednesday's dinner, the pattern of Tuesday's—sees the solemn tides roll in opposite their window on the twilight sands—sees the days speed by, and the little black moustache turn gray, and the square-chested guardsman in 1895, possibly on Bognor pier, recalling this very week, when he is 75, as the tide of that year and day rolls in, solemn, whispering—sees his escutcheon in the little country church—sees the black paint on it crack and turn gray—sees it decay, and asks in a sort of bewilderment, "How is it that the gray tide is so regular and constant, and as it were sly and reticent, as if it were always going to *say something*, and yet never does say it?"

I never did say, I don't say it now, that there is any virtue in only having a perambulator by way of carriage. I don't say that riding in a four-horsed coach with postilions in blue jackets and white hats sharpens the avenging angel's sword. What I say is that the gray tide has a very wonderful way with it, and rolls on longer than coaches to Goodwood, and a wonderful wise saying strikes me as I write—quite a sweet thing in sayings, which is this—

They who live longest will see most!

To J. F. H.

FELPHAM, Friday, 7.30.

HERE is the shore where dear old Blake the painter in his four years' residence used to wander, seeing Moses and the prophets.

I am reading at intervals D'Israeli's *Venetia*, which is, as you probably know, based on the life of Lord Byron. There do not seem to me, as yet, any great strokes of genius in it, nor much polish of style.

In holidays a good burst of changeful light reading, all in one vein, is not a bad plan; so I mean to follow this up with *Vivian Grey*, *The Young Duke*, etc. Even the boyish work of a man who had force enough to become Prime Minister can't be trash, and must contain in solution much drawing from nature. There is no question as to the delightfulness of good novels, at any rate for holiday hours. Novels are bad, not because they *are* novels, but only in so far as they

falsify Nature and Life. This is true also of painting.

7th August, 7.30.

On shore. Reading *The Young Duke*, a wilderness of wicked vitality, no doubt substantially true, "when George the Fourth was king." The brilliant sketching in his own razory manner is in some chapters wonderful. He never reaches Bulwer in a sort of starry amplitude and genuine sense of the ineffable, but he is more dazzling in rapid penetration and brief certainty, and his wit and humour are finer and more native. Bulwer has a sort of stilted patrician and quixotic strut, not void of real nobility, but while witty in a cultured sort of way, he seems so from a sense of duty.

Tuesday, 5 P.M.

Got into *Contarini Fleming* which was spoken of to me as an interesting description of the education of a poet. D'Israeli himself in a recent preface speaks well of it. The singular way in which he ducks and dives from the craziest romance to the most frigid, drawing-room, keen finish of acquaintance with "good society" is very noticeable. If a young man of no connections wanted to know how to comport himself in "Society," I should say read Bulwer and D'Israeli very closely. B. and D'I. both *believe* in "Society," and never suspect their creed. They therefore perceive its elements, as painters catch aspects and sportsmen have an eye alive to game. The animus of this school of manners may be often worthless, but the

Art of it is valuable—just as while the sensuality of the Venetian School may at times be great, their method is always nearest the grand truth.

JUST now the Epistle to the Galatians is a kind of Mont Blanc in importance and attractiveness. What bears on it in profane literature acquires interest from that cause. Because Cicero and Cæsar and Pompey indirectly had to do with the Galatæ they seem somebody. I am never tired of going over the ground, nor of squaring any fraction of it, nor of laying down any new analysis of it, nor of delving nor tunnelling. It is as important to me as if I were proprietor of the province. Yet if the question were asked, "What are you going to do with it?" all I can say is—(1) Feed on it; (2) Teach it to half a dozen young journeymen, and think myself abundantly repaid if they will attend regularly.

And all I crave is an increase of this principle of concentration, it is the best way to get a little, and do a little good.

And how little of genuine good we can either get or do in this little bit of life! To do a thing with one's might is a serious business. No labour seems too great, no reiteration too frequent, if one can but really grasp such a piece of work as the Galatians so as to give it over, simplified and impressive, into the hands and hearts and heads of half a dozen others. What are the dreams of classic poetry and mythology which lull and stimulate alternately the imagination

to the granitic vastness, length, breadth, depth, and height of such high arguments as are found in Paul's Epistles! It is the difference between living and dreaming.

The following is written in acknowledging the receipt of Matthew Arnold's *St. Paul and Protestantism.*

THANK you, my dear boy, for the book just come, and which I shall read, though I have my unfathomable doubts as to M. A.'s fitness to give a new interpretation to St. Paul, whose Epistles I have only lately got to some extent generalised so as to be open to future meditation. Whatever I have studied of them, and this has been for many years, and with as much yearning eagerness and breathless awe as I have felt in nothing except the words of the Lord Jesus, has tended to the confirmation of the old evangelic interpretation of them, in which perhaps I should not have seen my way so clearly but for their accordance with my own "experience." All that unutterable sense of sin, that terrible deadly fight with evil, those strivings of the Spirit I went through, and more; all that deliverance, that liberty of the Gospel, that being justified by faith in Christ, that peace with God, that shedding abroad by the Holy Ghost of the love of God in the heart, that coming in of the "new creation"; all the shades and lights of experience since then. Twenty-three years of such experience, which inwardly is as great and as simple a fact as the facts of seeing and hearing, make me unable to re-

ceive, even to *per*ceive, any other interpretation. And I have met with such scores and hundreds who strike hands with me in life and death on these great matters that it is settled "without controversy" to me.

I believe if I could have been doubtful I should have been. My mental habits, my tastes, everything, would have led me away from the Puritans.

Thus much for *myself*. As to others, their sincerity, their safety, I positively withhold all judgment. I leave them to my Master and theirs. He does all things well and will "do right."

To W. D.

SOUTHPORT, 29*th January* 1870.

HAVE read three vols. of *The Ring and the Book*, with a curious mixture of impatience and admiration. The holding-out of so much thought, effort, power, over such a long course is like Captain Somebody walking a thousand miles in a thousand hours. The penetration reminds you of the Bow Street runner: "Wherever did the man get his information?" (not *always* correct. Hophni for Uzzah, Peter's wife's sister for her mother).

Then to find every character thinking and talking Browning, is like strong coffee that swells the nerves and causes a dull ache over the eyes. Pompilia, full of ellipses and obscurity, is so different from the *mode* of the sweet creature he has consummately set before you. Peruvian bark, strong coffee, tea at 10 P.M. that keeps you staring all night with intense repro-

duction of the events of the day, the scarlet verbena you saw in the conservatory ever enlarging its image among all. Yet the book is a mine of intellectual wealth.

17*th February* 1870.

GREATLY relished the pictures to-day. Perhaps the most haunting impression produced by the Rembrandt landscapes. Painting puzzles me as much as ever, though all my life has been spent over it; I mean as to what constitutes its *spell.* It is a thing you may sicken over, a thing requiring a fine freshness of the mind and senses, fine conditions of contact, cautious uses of it, as of wine; but its nameless, weird power is enormous: that dusk and glimmering river bank shelving and sloping, those Dutch peasants hauling their nets in the foreground, at once obscure and distinct, as if only as much lived of them as Thought *willed* to live, those trees leaning here and there in the darkness—"forests and enchantments drear,"—that church rising dark by the dark village against the troubled-pensive gleams in rolling clouds. And again, those mysterious flats on either side the shadowy, solemn river, and the heights beyond them, with the distance moving off into loneliest remoteness, the eye able to stay nowhere, but obliged to wander, like "the gloomy brewer's ghost" or the "Flying Dutchman."

The sublimity of homely melancholy, composed of gravest reason, flitting imagination, and most deep fireside love and affection: these effects are not

tricks of Rembrandt Van Rhyn, they are humanity working out its own image in its own way, and with its own materials.

The pre-Raffaelite dicta of ten years ago would have laid these landscapes dead. The "awe of observation" peeping and botanising and protesting, and putting the screw on square inches, would slay all such art, and it is the grandest of all.

And the only answer to all mere verbal logic of imitation in this direction is a Flanders hurricane of disgust whistling over the wolds.

To his Brother.

June 1870.

Just got home from a country excursion. I left on Tuesday to meet the Budgetts at Faversham in Kent. Last year I spent a similar week with them in exploring Surrey. They took the coachman with them, a pair of horses, and a waggonette, and the party consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Budgett, Miss Budgett, and myself. Our route, after I joined them, was not over the best ground, not comparable for beauty to last year in Surrey, but I think the enjoyment was greater and the intercourse of the pleasantest sort, involving all the best elements—religious, intellectual, and social, yet unexciting because of its simplicity. At Rochester we learned from the verger of the Cathedral that Charles Dickens had been seized at dinner with a fit on Wednesday evening. On our way we had to pass his house at Gad's Hill—stopped

opposite to it for a moment, and saw two physicians evidently in consultation at the bay window. This was at 4.30, and at that moment he was dying. He expired at 6 or soon after. It was affecting to see, for the first time, his country house under these circumstances. A few weeks ago I passed him as he walked in a weary sort of way, and wrapped in his own thoughts, from the Royal Academy Exhibition and down Piccadilly.

Did I tell you that Cassell offered to pay me for the right to copy the "Hymn" as a "first-class broad-sheet wood engraving" to give away with a new edition of their Family Bible? I agreed to give them the Copyright if they would make it a good thing. It will be a capital advertisement, and the subject must be of use in setting in motion good and useful thought.

To Mrs. STEWARD.

One of the amazing things of life is the mingling of the occult and the obvious in the relations of man to man. Nothing expresses it better than the circle and its radii. The centre knows A B C D E F, but B and D don't know each other, nor F and C nor A and E. All operate on the centre. The centre operates on all. But that is only the beginning, A B C D E F are all centres of new circles, of various sizes and potencies; some mechanical, others magnetic; and they commingle in a way too rapid to follow. We can only know them by knowing "what God and man is."

The one central point of bliss from which alone one dare safely look out on life and meet the 600,000,000,000,000 of waves per second, is a heart-felt faith; and this, one feels more and more, is just "the gift of God," and can't be reasoned away from the outside. Its real nature can no more be defined than life can be defined, or than light can be defined. The best that David Livingstone could make of it, in reciting his conversion, was that it was as when a blind man's eyes are opened to see colours. He can't explain further to the blind; those who see understand without explanation.

How it is that its power and beauty cannot be much enhanced by reason, and how it is that the many waters of unreason cannot quench, and scarcely dim it, is as wonderful as most questions are when gone into. So we say "The man is a great philosopher and an eminent scholar, and *yet* a humble believer;" and we say, "Betty Foy is as silly an old goose as you'll meet in a sandy lane, and *yet* every one knows her to be a saint such as there isn't one greater in the parish."

The philosopher's saintliness is found on exactly the same plane as Betty Foy's, and marked by the same tokens. The difference is not a matter of degree but of kind: one can't be measured by the other.

To J. F. H.

21*st July* 1870.

On the beach under Hunstanton. The sun a round plate of red gold dipping near the Sea among lilac-gray clouds—the Sea itself steel colour with a touch of yellow in it. Due north it is grand to think there is nothing between yourself and the icebergs.

Secret continuance sublime
To the Sea's end.

(*N.B.*—Always spell "Sea" with a capital S. It is only right.)

The feet make no sound on the flat wide sands. You hear the sound of your pencil as you write. All human beings have become distant black dots. A gull wings low by the edge of the tide. There is a lighthouse on the cliff above which has a tall white flame seen far up the North Sea. And now the sun is like the red golden dome of the Kremlin at Moscow, or rather of the church of St. Isaac at St. Petersburg as described to me by W. B. Pope[1] (whom I love to think of, so good and wise is he). And now there is no sun of to-day. There are some fiery wings spread over where he was, whose feathers thin off into the upper skies where there are no clouds, and no mutations. A muffled sound of artillery comes over the Sea. Can it be that the hosts have broken into war?

If outward circumstances could produce the highest happiness it would be mine just now. The enumera-

[1] Dr. Pope of Didsbury Theological College.

tion of blessings seems almost too solemn to array—and these vast sweeping, simple sands; this sound of the Sea ("The same sound is in my ears, which in those days I heard"); this sky of crimson and amber and lofty blue are all favourable to large perceptions of life and its bearings. And I am, thank God, reasonably happy. But since we came (and this is generally the case for the first few days of one of these grand Sea holidays), a languid, listless depression hangs over the faculties, like the mist by the ocean in the last Arthurian battle by the shore, and even the soul partakes of it.

To W. D.

THIS morning we had a row on the Sea. It is the height of holiday joy for a father to take his boys with him in a boat and row with them. No joy more sweet and pure than to see them get brown in the sun and grow stronger in the Sea air.

There are no dreams like "Sea Dreams." How grand it was last night after sunset to walk a quarter of a mile beyond our lodgings and find myself in a solitary white road with barley and wheat fields on each side, a hint of vast distance eastward, the Sea westward, the lighthouse with its steady white star, the lightship out at Sea with its red light going in and out, the first stars appearing, the soft fresh night breeze blowing, the hush, the calm, the sublime calm, "the rising mind," the sense of God!

To F. J. S.

30th July 1870.

How much attention and thought is claimed by the state of the continent just now! You will scarcely remember the congratulations on the Era of Peace which were so general in 1851 when the great elm trees under the glass of the first Crystal Palace grew green in the May weather. It is distressing to recall the universal tone then and to glance along the Rhine now, and think of how little at present science has done for peace!

What of our most peaceful art during these days of suspense and trouble? In Prussia the passenger trains are looked on with contempt as a sort of impertinent lumber; so just now people won't care very much about pictures, with such a tempest about to blow. A thousand trumpets will drown the piping of Arcadia.

2nd August 1870.

What a venerable old man must Stothard have looked in his later years! The bust in the vestibule of the National Gallery is to my mind almost awe-striking. It is like Old Father Thames when seen from a point where the shaggy eyebrows drop over the deep-set eye. It would have been memorable to hear him talk. He used the polite, stately, and deferential "Sir" in many of his sentences. "That is all glazing, Sir," he said to a friend as they reclined under some trees through the tops of which the filtering yellow light produced that transparent

effect obtained in oil pictures by the process technically termed "glazing." "It looks very unfinished, Sir," he said to Constable when that painter showed him the picture of "The opening of Waterloo Bridge," a most strange and unlikely subject for Constable.

One of the exquisitely pleasant crofts and paddocks of painting is found in the sketches and studies of Stothard. We see his wondrous pen trying a variety of attitudes for so small a design as a book plate. The suggestive grace of these deliberative thinkings is bewitching. Next to these come his smaller works, oil studies about six or eight inches long. In these his sense of colour, the grace of attitude and composition, are seen quite as well as on a large scale, while his deficiency in expanded natural detail is *not* seen. It is seldom that so refined, sensitive, and contemplative a nature rises into that force of perception of surface detail which marks men like Dickens, and men like Meissonier. It cannot come down to be curious about it. It does not care for knuckles and veins. These things also consume endless time—require endless and exhausting labour, and when expressed have little intellectual force or meaning. What has a well-imitated silk stocking or shoe-buckle, taking a week of consummate toil to realise—what has this to do with such thinking as that of Stothard? True, there is a *medium*. Stothard's "drawing" was one of his greatest gifts, but it was not the drawing of Wilkie or of Dadd. It was far more noble than that of Wilkie, though far from being so "racy." It

was less express than that of Dadd, but it had not the fever of acute and consuming observation upon it. It was cool and sweet as the dark bowers where his ladies sit on the grass, or where his nymphs hide by the sedge of their fountains. But alas! not one in a thousand can enter into the breathing beauty of a little Stothard. Any one can criticise the size, shape, colour, of a shoe-buckle or a silk stocking.

Such men as Stothard give a venerableness and solidity to art. Erskine once got him into a witness box and tried to bother him with mathematics. What about this angle and the other? But the calm old Triton put things so well that Erskine said, "It's no use angling here, I find."

There is nothing produces a more lovely impression on the mind than one of those "glimmering bowers and glades" where Stothard's Desdemona-like ladies are engaged with book, or lute, or dance: when the thin trees shoot lightly against an obscure glooming of the groves, and leave a sort of infinite whispering sensation on the imagination. You have to leave off at a certain point with him. He was the Quaker of Art, and the Charles Lamb conception of the Quakeress with all its doveiness was embodied in his work. But of broad brim and cut collar, and suppressed, shrewd innocence—of spotless brown and speckless gray silver—you may have just enough, and that ere long. Life of the best sort is forceful as well as reticent, and has no peculiarities or tiny shibboleths.

To T. A.

THE proper place for the right seeing of Thomas Stothard's work is at the rate of three in a parlour, and that parlour the parlour of the Vicar of Wakefield: no one to see them without going there, and drinking in the influences of the Vicar's household first, and taking a "dish" of the vicar's wife's tea, or a glass of her cool cowslip wine. Were I a despot I would thus distribute Stothard all over the kingdom into the nooks of this kind. No one should have *more* than three. These would mostly be done on a millboard and framed in plain flat with no moulding, and they would run from 6 inches to 12 inches, or even as high as 14 inches. When Stothard gets beyond that we feel a want, when he keeps within that key no Arcadian shepherd of the Golden Age ever piped a sweeter song. He excels Raffaele, he transcends Phidias in pure immortal "Grace."

Monday, 9.15 A.M. Crowded in a *Brake* to Broad Street on way to Westminster.

WHAT deductions from the mere intellectual force of life come from the "conscience that makes cowards of us all." The "native hue of Resolution is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of Thought." The moral forces are to the intellectual what the higher phenomenal forces of nature are to the lower. Fancy a garden in the Bahamas, the growth of years, suddenly desolated by a hurricane. It is clear that no small calculations

will serve in reckoning up the sum of life. Your "Key to all the Mythologies," your sour wincing under the strokes of Mr. Carp, about your "tractate," your "Excursus on Crete." Poor old Thomas Aquinas! A little "fatty degeneration of the heart" is enough to end all those. Your foot slips on the mere splashing of the kitchen grease of existence. It is enough to rouse all the powers of anguish and make the deep of the heart to boil; for what is your life?

We go out and take Science by the throat and shake her; "You only lead me to face and enter the blackness of darkness, you tell me nothing, you sorceress! What care I for your ghastly researches among the slimy 'dragons of the prime'? Is there no voice nor any that answers?"

I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord.

Voices? Yes; they began "crying in the wilderness." They broke out of the darkness over Bethlehem—

Peace on earth. Goodwill to men.

The earth broke forth with singing, the trees of the field clapped their hands. The Voices took wing—dove-voices that no devil-hawks could swoop on. They spread abroad, the trembling gold of their wings glittered against the cloudless cope of Infinity. They lodged on every pinnacle and parapet of Time, and among the rest, "as doves to their respective windows,"

a good number flew into the dovecot of Wesley's Hymns.

> While Jesu's blood through earth and skies
> Mercy, free, boundless mercy, cries.

The Truth ("I am the Truth") is this, that the "covering cherub" for all the clashing accidents of Thought and Time is the sweep of the Atonement. "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of isles be glad thereof"; or else perhaps

> A still small voice says unto me,
> Thou art so full of misery,
> *Were it not better not to be?*

To C. M.

It matters little among various allowable methods what a man does if he will only *follow it up* long enough. You have your man with his "Commonplace Book," his "Index Rerum," his "Squaring." All depends on *going on*. Galton reminds the real traveller not to wish to get to his journey's end, not to go too fast. "Three miles a day," says he, "will take you across a thousand miles in a year." Only *go on*. In due time you will

> Gaze at the Pacific, and your men
> Stare at each other with a wild surmise,
> Silent upon a peak in Darien.

This touch from Galton has so impressed me that I use the word 'Galtonise" for the not making haste—

Breathed, as it were,
To an untiring and continuate goodness.

"Three miles a day," but all mastered, all rich, all satisfying!

26th October 1870.

THE yellow fog again from early morning till now 10 P.M.

"You seem to have many hindrances in your calling," says the Observer. At times, it seems all hindrance. The vexing influence of the one element of Light, which is related to Painting as silence is to Music, might be enough to take the heart out of an impatient man. In a chorus at an oratorio a few whispers, even a little chat, does not make much difference, but in a Jenny Lind trill you must be able to hear a pin drop. For certain parts of pictures the light, and the eye, and the hand, and the mind, and the model must all combine into a thrilling serenity of mutual action—passion governed to the point of perfect repose. When this state is broken in upon from without, the man is never more liable to be in a towering passion. We should excuse an astronomer if, when, having waited for the long-coming moment of occultation, he were engaged in some delicate observation, and some paltry interruption threatened him, he were to lose temper. In the painter's work these hours of exigency are frequent; yet because they are not distinguishable from the outside, sufficient allowance is not made for the effect of interruption. Indeed, the variety of occupation and moods

demanded by a picture leads to misapprehension. His painting is like an Oratorio: while his choruses are drumming and banging and roaring, the painter is prepared to take things easily; but when the more delicate solos are being sung, he is in a fidget; and as the one phase runs so rapidly into the other with no time to explain, it does give the sense of being assaulted when his varying moods are misunderstood. This is one reason why some painters will never admit any one to their studios.

To J. S. B.

2nd November 1870.

How puzzling to the mind is the difference between the individual and the great abstract entity of a public event—a war! *e.g.* A is a Prussian aged thirty, height six feet, square-shouldered, fresh, strong, thoughtful, accomplished; knows, after years of the gymnasium, several languages. It cost him much to get, at first, the inflections of a single irregular verb, but he did get them, and has them down in bins in the cellars of his mind. Also Botany; so that on the Hartz Mountains in last May he told "Gretchen" wonderful details about a very little flower got high up on a steep place—told her the result of many lamplight, midnight hours. There is no end to what that man knows. He was mobilised in July—saw Wissenburg and Worth, saw the Emperor surrender, and knew, as an individual, as much about the war as one head could carry. See

him now helping at his gun, all his blood up, his eyes glistening with the excitement of battle as the shells fall near him. Such is A.

. . . . . .

The scene was laid on October 28th at 3 P.M. The battle ended at 5. At 5.30 the camp kettles were steaming, and there came the news of the capitulation of Metz, which was what A's eyes and mind were straining to see and hear. "We shall hear of it before noon to-morrow," said he. But at 3.10 (and 20 seconds) a shot from a chassepot went into the temples of this man—into the penetralia of his mind's temple, "the dome of thought, the palace of the soul," and lodged close against the fibres which on the one side held fast the irregular verb and on the other the Hartz flower. He fell straight by the simple force of gravity; and there he lies. In a few seconds B was called to his place at the gun. And where is the war? It goes on as briskly as ever. The Germans once more conquer. Moltke's steam-hammer works, and A is only one of the sparks that fly upward. The *Daily Telegraph* gives a vivid summary of the action, city men rattle it off; the working man misspells it; and the old squire down in the Queen Anne's Hall among the woods describes it huskily over the walnuts and port.

One has got into a web somehow about it. A seemed so real; and one thinks so much of a man who is ready with his irregular verbs; and the stamen of a Hartz flower is such an astounding thing with

its gums and dews on it, and its miraculous look under the microscope. The fairy tales of science are so very important that it is hard to understand such sudden foreclosing and endings because of a chassepot bullet, of the destiny of which the man who fired it had not the slightest idea. Is one not to stop to think about A and try to unravel a little? But the clock strikes eleven, and one almost "feels condemned" for having thought about A and puzzling at all when a piece of duty on canvas lies spread sternly before the eye—as much a duty to think over and wonder about and strain after as A's sixty-pounder, or the foregone irregular verb, or the little flower on the Hartz Mountains.

One dare not follow A any farther because there glimmer on the mental disc such strange images going and coming as in dissolving views. Yet they *will* go and come—exhalations of thought, ten thousand on ten thousand images and thoughts. The best way to finish the self-raised history of A is a pine-wood on a height—

> And one far off divine event
> To which the whole Creation moves.

But whatever should have brought up the next image out of the vasty deep? Is there any rational connection, or even proper sequence of perplexity, in a view of "Napoleon the third taking soup at Wilhelmshöhe"?

To F. J. S.

December 1870.

A HAPPY new year to you!

You are doing a service in protesting against those abominable French influences which more or less are lowering the moral perceptions of some of our own artists, and which, if suffered to prevail against what they are pleased to call "puritanism," would rapidly poison us as a people, and bring us where the French now are.

"Lust hard by hate" has been the dominating genius of the French school for long past. So their canvas either drips with blood, or glows with false passion. It would be better for us to have no name in Art among the nations, or to go on with our harmless domestic subjects—our little girls with sashes, saying, "Come and tee me dump"—than that this reek of hot blood should steam up from our studios.

SOMETIMES in the darkest hours an idea for a picture will start up like Aurora, and begin a new day for the mind. I believe I owe much of my health to the ever-springing changes and surprises of the Imagination in the course of my work. Painting has this enormous advantage that it blends the ideal and the mechanical so completely. After weeks of real drudgery over one picture the imagination which had ceased from invention has been couching beneath in the quiet caves, not overdriven by constant irritation, and comes forth with the dew of its youth upon

it. One of the richest characteristics of imagination is that it does not lessen with age, but grows in real power. "Something which men *call* their Imagination," said D. G. Rossetti to me once, "may decline as the animal spirits lessen, but the genuine thing grows with age." This is quite true. Imagination is the twin sister of common sense, and not the fretful and excitable bantling of overstrung nerves. The delirious dreaming of a fidgety fancy is no more Imagination than the grotesquerie of St. Vitus's dance is wit.

The years of available and happy life which have been already enjoyed ought to be the cause of thankfulness, even if "the days of darkness" were many. "The sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things," says Tennyson. Surely, in the sphere of Faith at least, there is some mistake here. "For what we *have* received the Lord make us truly thankful."

Beauty, grandeur, subtlety, delicacy of perception, are commonly supposed to be attained by those who pick and choose and disdain. Never was a greater mistake. It is the man who knows nothing common or unclean that wrings the fine essences out of Nature. The dilettante is he who misses the mark. Nathanael Hawthorne attained to wonderful subtlety of expression and perception, but his power was gained by his reverence for the commonest things. He had no need to "scale the Andes' clifty side" to see vast horizons.

"Poor woman, she is beset with fears and doubts, and had she fallen into the hands of the Methodists must soon have fallen into a state of despondency."—Mrs. Hare, *Memorials of a Quiet Life.*

One is penetrated with sadness at seeing people stand in the Christian Church on each side of impassable gulfs of misunderstanding, neither of them able to join hands. Think of the mistake above indicated, awful in its separating power, grotesque in its misapprehension!

He received this letter from Mr. Ruskin.

Oxford, 1*st January* 1871.

My dear Smetham—I cannot easily tell you how glad I am to have your letter, how more than glad to know of your tranquil and honourable life. Long may it thus continue. But let me have a line sometimes to say that it does so. If I cannot answer, you will know it is only because my hand is weary, or the power of the dog gone before its task is done.—Ever affectionately yours, J. Ruskin.

To C. M.

6th April.

David Cox was not farther off the world of Meissonier and Gerôme than I. Yet a D. Cox fetches as much as a Gerôme. Gerôme would be a babe on the wild fields and moors, and under the impending storms of D. Cox. D. Cox would be a babe among the marble and carved steel of Gerôme. As Thomson's "Seasons" to a levee at St. James's, so is D. Cox to Gerôme. The loose, solemn, sweet and windy thought and fluent rapture of Thomson, swelling with the soul

of nature and "musing praise," that is Cox. The reception of Sir Garnet Wolseley in orders and stars at the levee, that is Gerôme. You can bring D. Cox and Gerôme to no sort of common element except that they are both "authors" (as Turner called himself) and need the chromatic gamut of the twelve pigments to write their books.

To me the *Life of D. Cox* is a "revival service" of the highest order. He was a quiet, calm apostle, who spoke as Paul at Lystra and as the sixty-ninth psalm speaks. Men don't listen to that side of truth much, but *some* are sent to proclaim it, and keep God's work before God's world, and I rise to a higher life as I see this grand old husbandman out early and late in the former and the latter rain, having long patience, waiting for the precious seed.

And his £5 notions of *pay* come home to me with the moral majesty of the true evangelist's rebuke of the calling "gain godliness," and the unheroic Christianity of so many Christians. I go to his "inquiry room" subdued and ready to learn, and rise with renewed energy.

As to the relative advantage or importance of oil or water colours, I am obliged to leave that to pure feeling. By closely watching the course of work I have noticed that for three or four months together I can pursue oil painting with delight; but that often, most suddenly and unexpectedly, a strong disgust of the senses will set in, and that then I am thankful to escape to the land of Water Colour. In like manner

on finding how tedious and laborious some water-colour pictures become towards their close, and that it will in certain parts take several days to execute in water what might be done in a few hours with oil colours, I am ready to vow that I will never work except with oils. Practice equalises their claim somewhat, and each is found to have its special charms. The fascination of water colour is in its soft, silent, insensible, thought-like operations, in the ease of retouching it without disturbing the surface, in the pleasant sense of protection and glimmering veiling produced by the needful glass over the picture's face, which dreads no dust, and never gets "ruined" in an Exhibition. Water colour never gained so much on my love as during the latest spell of it, beginning about a month ago; and when I think of Samuel Palmer and Boyce and Dewint and David Cox, and the exquisite "bits" we see yearly in all the exhibitions by unknown men, when I recall the outdoor delight of a twelve-inch drawing "on the spot," and the creeping silence (as of a moving sunbeam on the wall) of the pencil, the rapid drying of colour under the brush, as dew from grass at sunrising, the corrective possibilities, the portfolio conveniences, the comparative unpretentiousness of this medium, and add to this the demands of the drawing-room for bright decoration as compared with the demand for oil pictures, it sometimes seems as if water colour would win the day.

The framing, too, is so pliant that most men could

afford a mount, and bead, and glass, which is sufficient to house the stranger from the Thought Land.

To T. A.

25th May 1871.

On Tuesday I was at Red Hill, at Linnell's. The old man in the true boy-spirit took me up alone to show me the picture the R.A. had rejected (in 1867?) and some other "great shames," in which I heartily agreed with him, for he has been shamefully treated. Few know how essentially great his landscape is. I could so well enter into his fresh, confiding, outspeaking way of talking. It is just the way of the truly imaginative artist oppressed with those mystic inward workings which cluster round his own consciousness, and make him seek relief in this impulsive expression of the bubbling thoughts and feelings.

When showing me some of his Scripture work he said, "I paint to live, it is my profession, but my *life* is *in these things*"—referring to his Bible studies. I felt a similar glow to that of Correggio when he cried, "I also am a painter," but my echo was to dear old Linnell's sentiment, and I thought of my squared Bible at home.

To C. M.

10th June 1871.

The windings of the river of study are charming —sometimes half odd. For example, I found myself squaring *Much Ado About Nothing*, Act ii. scene 3, in following out Isa. xxiv. 8. Bible study, indeed, is *all* study in its possibilities.

9.10, Broad Street. "Ter-rain!" "Why here I am on the wrong platform," — hasty run — out of breath—just catch it—get seated—make reflections on "absence of mind." I really don't see how a painter of imaginary scenes is to get over the occasional fits of absence. So far from being "wool-gathering" it is *nugget-digging*. Since I set off to the railway I have had a good picture subject presented to my mind with great vividness. It will be painted some day and be worth £50. A man can't both see pictures in the mind and signboards over the shops. What he *does* see outwardly is usually only some accident of the passing object, the effect of rain on the roof, the gradation of gray in the church in the mist, something that will tell in a picture some day. This is the painter's practicalness. If he did not even *indulge* the concentrated absence of mind to what usually catches the attention of men he would be a lazy dreamer.

A painter of this class has a right to be angry at the ignorance of those who expect as much promptness and clearness in externals from him as from a man whose whole life is a study of current events.

To F. J. S.

Truly I do enjoy this quiet writing almost more than face to face. The reason is simply that somehow the fibre of my physique is not quite strong enough, and the very delight of direct intercourse with many

of those I love at once generates a sort of acid that eats into the fibre. And, if the elements are congenial, as where in the case of F. J. S. art is combined with all else dear to me, it is almost worse. Looks, tones, gestures, the very eyelashes and the "accidents," in general are etched deep with this aquafortis, which does not get at the mental conditions except through this here "fibre"; then, reflexly, it touches them so far as to create reaction. No amount of experiment does more than modify this. I went to Ford Madox Brown the other evening, and though I took a small dose, yet B.'s beautiful geniality and ingrained kindliness, and that of his family, Arthur Hughes's face and retiring gentle power, Burton's kind greeting (he reminds me of Thackeray's Colonel Newcome, somehow), E. B. Jones's "wide blue eyes as in a picture," Morris's rum and indescribable "deportment" (not at all like Turveydrop's)—all these things not simply pass; they *bite*. They always did; and if I let the acid stay on too long, there is a bubble and a sharp fume, and a black ragged line, instead of the sweet incision of event. The remedy has always been in the mechanical adoption of a life like that of the Lady of Shalott. She weaves continually. She dare not stop her weaving, either night or day, so is not an idle hussey. At the same time, she is not cut off from the outward world. She sees *all*, but it is in a glass. Shakespeare, too, has it in perfection:

> The idea of her life shall sweetly creep
> Into his study of imagination,

> And every lovely organ of her life
> Shall come apparelled in more precious habit,
> More moving, delicate and full of life,
> Into the eye and prospect of his soul,
> Than when she lived indeed.

This, indeed, has become a sort of life-motto with me. It is not that life is a mere voluptuous dream. My "weaving" goes on. I have just, in fact, come to the end of my Bible "squaring," which has cost me twenty years of leisure, having tunnelled through the whole Book. My work in the Church is just as continuous and direct. I keep up correspondence with all my friends, and, as Von Moltke fights battles in his cabinet and knocks armies really to pieces, so do I conceive of this Camera Obscura life laid on me unwillingly by this defect of "fibre."

I could say more, but I see I have taken too long a radius in my compasses. At this proportion I shall never be done.

I sympathise with your long toil. I see you exhausted on the 8th, and know what it means: that occult, reiterated, breathless labour which is appreciated by one man in 2000—even of the intelligent. That having things "right" at "the price of blood." Still it tells in the long run, and you will come out Conqueror. In two different ways I see and admire the stern toil of F. M. B. and D. G. R. No one knows what work costs these men, and how profitable it is to see their example.

About this time he received the following from D. G. Rossetti.

THE MANOR HOUSE,
KELMSCOTT,
LECHDALE.

Morris is here now from Iceland, and has brought a fund of anecdote, of course, though the country seems pretty well barren of all else, as far as I can judge. However, such things will not do at second hand; the face and voice of the man who was their "pars magna" are the life and soul of them. An Icelandic pony for his two charming little girls is the tangible result of the journey. It carried him, incessantly almost, for many weeks, and is now grazing with unexpressed, but I should think unquestionable, relish in the English river-meadow behind this house.

There is much in your letter which is quite beyond the scope of a hasty answer like this; but I cannot help reverting with real sorrow to what you say so reservedly but poignantly of your professional difficulties. That picture of the 'Hymn' should have met with better recognition, but it is among the Works whose audience is limited; and it is sad to see how little permanent hold it seems to have given you on hanging committees. When in London again I must absolutely bring Graham to you, *i.e.* when he also returns from his present holiday in Scotland. Davies told me of a picture you were doing from Comus, which he seemed to think very successful in tone and method. I want to see it; but more to see you, and hope ere long to try and get you to Chelsea again—as my stay here cannot last much longer—and to renew old ideas and discussions.

My health is not brilliant in any way, but I push on as yet. Do you get news of Shields? Not that I ask this question to burden you with more correspondence, but hope to see you soon in a Studio new swept and garnished, though a devil or two may be there yet.—Ever yours, D. G. R.

To D. G. R.

13*th September* 1871.

I MUST indulge myself for awhile in a little conversation with the pen in reply to your welcome letter. I am not quite sure whether I am not more healthy and happy under the veil of correspondence than in much face to face intercourse with vivid actual life. What your tapestry at Kelmscott is to you—fixing your goggle eye trancedly on some huge problem on Samson's shoulder—the phenomena of visible intercourse are to me. All is so great, so pleasant, so wondrous. Deep calls to deep, and I haven't got the physical grit to take it easy. But in the studio with the pen it is like being in a Camera Obscura; all silent yet moving, life and dream together.

My explanation about the Article[1] related more to myself than to you. I felt sure on the whole that you would see the motions of the thing; but as I have never been careless or capricious in regard to undertakings I felt bound sometime to account for the arrest of what under other conditions would have been truly a labour of love. I am profoundly grateful for your settled confidence in my affections for you and . . . thank you most kindly for your offer of help. But the fact of the case is that we are not in actual want of money, nor are likely to be for some time to come. Ever since we were married we have,

[1] Proposed review of Rossetti's poems.

one way or other, been able to pay our way. It is true that a sense of the exceeding precariousness of painting, and of late a sort of awakening to the perception that my instrument was elaborately set to tunes that were not popular, have made me faint and sicken with fear as to the possibility of getting hemmed in by debt or dependence, but the day has not yet come. This summer I have been pulling my organ to pieces, and pricking new tunes on the barrel: "Polly put the Kettle on," "'Tis jolly to hunt in the six-foot fern," "My Heart's in the Highlands," etc., *i.e.* I have been sketching out of doors heather and fern and country, sort of English scenes, which are to be tenanted by live rustics, instead of the other sort. I have not yet had time to finish anything in this style, but my ambition now is to drop all pretensions to "'igh Art," and take my place among the labouring classes. I love these wood walks and lanes and banks as intensely as anything else, and it will be no cross to come down if I can do it, which remains to be seen. What I want is to produce something which will have a kind of strict market value, not of the fancy kind. I believe that moderate-sized pictures from 20 to 50 guineas and from 18 inches to 3 feet are strictly in demand if they suit the taste of the typical English householder of the Upper Middle Classes. Then I'm their man if I can suit as to work. I've no qualms as to being an ill-used professor of better things, for the joy of life has long risen above this sort of nonsense. My doubts relate to whether

I can take my place in competition with those who have stuck their heads into heather and fern all their lives. Truly the very thing I want is that Wallis, Agnew, Vokins (or Nokes or Stokes, or Styles or Brown or Thompson) should give me 20—25—30—guineas for a two-foot oil "View in Surrey," having a shepherd boy with an oak branch in his hat. Then as to the Academicians and their hangings—"Bless their old gaiters!" I care as little as I care for the permission to dine given to all the rest of the world by the Emperor of China or Japan after he has got his own tuck-in. . . .

To C. M.

Tone in a picture is one of the noblest of all its elements, but it has a sort of spiritual entity; it has no existence in itself. It has no parts, yet it is a reality as much as the most precise piece of form in the picture. It is the overruling element. It is the kingly element. It brightens and subdues and ignores and adjusts. It has a splendour, but it is the splendour of Law, of subordination, of strong repression and cautious exaltation. It is felt by the observer as the pressure of authority is felt; but its motions can only be seen by the initiated. Correggio and Titian were masters of it, and it is this which crowns their art and makes it magical.

It is exactly in painting what the overruling perception and purpose is in life.

I ENTERED into every turn and winding of word, thought, feeling in your ventilator, and feel happy on your behalf; for it shows that you have hold of the golden chain of life which is "content," and is "great gain." How great none can tell, and making compound interest every hour.

What *is* content? The true answer to that is a world of bliss and rest. It is not helpless submission to necessity. It is not the fulfilment of our roving desires. It is a sublime condition, the product of knowledge and faith and hope and love. One of its conditions is the perception of our proper place in the universe, and the belief that we have strictly a vocation. Another is that cheerful humility of spirit which honour upholds, and which makes no extravagant demands on the Universe or on Providence. Another is the alchymic eye to see much in little—the spirit which made the old woman say to Bishop Burnett, as she held up her crust, "All this and Christ."

See how it is "great gain" when a crust is El Dorado!

To T. A.

I WENT down to Dulwich last week to have a look at the Gallery. It is the most delightful gallery in arrangement and surroundings that I know, or know of. You don't turn out of a hot street, where on the hot pavement you meet hot and discontented people coming out in lavender and straw-coloured gloves,

irritated with British art, like a bull that has seen a red rag (the ingrates!). You walk along a breezy quiet road—"This way to the Picture Gallery" ☞—under green trees, after green fields, and you give a little gravelly side turn, and—"The Picture Gallery is now open." How kind! How civil! How silent! You write your name in a visitors' book, and see that yesterday John Ruskin was here. Then you begin your lounging round, and note the thin browns of old Teniers' "Caves of Temptation," and Gerhard Dow's "Old woman and porridge pot," and Gainsborough's "Mrs. Siddons." All is sober and uncrowded, and well lighted, and profoundly still. And there is a man of sixty in gray suit with nankeen coloured waistcoat, and red flower in buttonhole, and white hat, and tasselled cane, and silver spectacles, and ruddy, thoughtful face. He has a blunt mouth, and somehow reminds one of Sir Joshua. You get into conversation with him. He has a real Vandevelde at home. His mother brought him here fifty years ago! I saw him muttering to Titian's "Europa" (it must have been about his mother and the flight of Time). I learned his name afterwards from the visitors' book, but if you think I am going to tell it you, you never were more mistaken in your life. The keeper of the Gallery comes and peers at you over his spectacles. He is not quite sure in his little room which are the pictures and which are the visitors, and he's come to see. I could have told him that the gentleman in gray and myself were certainly mere pictures walking

in a vain show, soon to disappear, and that fifty more years will see that little boy yonder with *his* mamma coming an old man in gray to recall the impressions of to-day and of *his* mother. But he won't find *us*.

It is always "Jacob's Dream" which turns the scale as to whether I come to Dulwich or no. Hazlitt wrote about Jacob's Dream in the *London Magazine* somewhere about 1824. Hazlitt! Where's Hazlitt? But "Jacob's Dream" is *there*; every tint and every scratch of the pencil in the trees is there. That picture was painted between Rembrandt's breakfast and his tea, on a late October day, when the wind was sighing and the leaves falling. I know it was.

A reference to this picture dates as far back as 1848. It is as follows:—

Did you ever see the Jacob's Dream in the Dulwich Gallery? He is a Dutchman, and an old clothes' man, for any refinement that he has about him. But what a vision he sees! A scrap of desert —a distant hill—a stunted bush shaking at intervals with the night wind is all the material he has about him; but in the dream and vision of the night he sees shapes which hardly separate themselves from the pensive glory and the rolling volume of cloud. Neither bird white-plumaged, nor angel white-winged, nor any other shape distinguishable in member, joint or limb—and yet a shape—sealing instruction as unutterable as the form is dim. "It stands still; he cannot discern the form thereof; an image is before

his eyes, there is silence." It is like a passage out of the deep book of Job.

To J. E. V.

See poem to Gladstone on "Use and Beauty" by "H." This eternal confounding of confusion on the question of Use and Beauty is enough to appal any one who has studied the subject. All you can answer is this, Ugliness never did, and never can do any good. On the other hand, Beauty won't save the soul, only Christ, who is the "Primeval Beauty," can do this. But these two poles are found in everything. Ignorance can't save the soul, and knowledge can't. And plain gowns can't, and gowns at thirty guineas can't, and discord can't, and music can't, nor mathematics, nor Irish bulls. If you want to be warm you must make a fire and stand near it, and not be under some stupid delusion that extracting a square root or measuring laughing gas with a two-foot rule has, somehow, something to do with being warm.

Then I saw that it is of much more importance to preserve a fresh and tender love to man and to God than to turn a corner of an art career; also, that the opinion of a small circle in a parlour won't be altered supernaturally; that Providence works by natural events, natural opinions, and elements, and that the victory which overcomes the world is not that which makes the world succumb, but that which rises above it.

God is angry with the wicked every day. Well, but is He angry with thy industry, thy truthfulness,

thy obliging ways, thy affectionateness? Go to the wise woman of Abel Beth Maachah, and she will show thee that Joab has no need to batter down a whole town for one rebel's sake; and will teach thee just where the whole secret lies. Pitch Sheba's head over the wall and thy city shall be safe.

IGNORANCE is so crass. Preach your throat dry and men won't be convinced. "Smith of Chichester" made £2000 a year, while Richard Wilson took picture after picture to a low dealer, who heaped them up saying, "Look here, Dick, I can't sell those I have got." Yet "Smith of Chichester" is now a byword, and Richard Wilson a renown. People look to men in power. So Reynolds overshadowed Wilson with his bland jealousy. People wait for one another's opinion: "What do you think, eh?" "Is it or is it not?" *i.e.* they wait till the cry of the mob has been raised and then they say, "Hooray! Wilson for ever! Smith down the river!" and would fain buy Wilsons when they are only to be had for great sums. If anything *could* sour a man who has the support of such a delightful pursuit, it is to feel sure of all this, as Richard Wilson was, and watch the timid ignorance of a public professing to care for art while in reality caring only for name.

To J. F. H.

1st October 1871.

YOU seem interested and amused by my theory of Ignorance in relation to art. But one of the first flights off the mere clods of art into the Empyrean is

the dictum that one of the most "snobbish" things in painting is perfection—that one *necessity* of the best kind of art is imperfection.

The analogy between Art and Religion is just that between earthly and heavenly things; but if these earthly things be obscure, *a fortiori*, much more obscure are the heavenly. Note one part of the analogy. In Christ's kingdom all was "bouleversement," and a Spartan, a Roman, a Greek, seeking after wisdom, of course could not receive the "kingdom of God." In their eyes the Christian was a sneak: "poor in spirit." Yet the servant was as his master. He could call twelve legions of angels, yet he did not invoke *one*; not even in the hour and power of darkness. The apostle said, "when I am *weak*, then am I *strong*." Frightful paradox to the pugnacious gladiator in the arena with the knuckle-dusters on. "Nevertheless I live," said Paul. As the life of electricity to the life of mechanism, however complex, so is true life in all kingdoms; and to grasp at a glance the true equations of art, so as to separate the precious from the vile, requires the swift disintegrating and reuniting power of intuition.

It is just that which throws men out so in the region of art. They are always receiving the shocks of Electric Paradox, and often get angry and say there is nothing *in* art because their mechanics fail them. They buy a mill and put a principle in it to grind. It won't grind and they smash their mill. They don't see that the solutions are effected by an invisible Power,

conducted by innumerable wires en rapport with the Universe. Cogs and wheels are next to nothing.

Put your medal in a solution, and all the silver flies to it in invisible flakes and molecules which won't obey any mechanical spirit—will only obey the proper spell, and come out of their holes to the music of the world, as the rats to the piper of Hamelin, trooping in drifts of invisibility to the design of Wyon, the Demiurgus "in wavering morrice."

But then nothing comes amiss to the *true* life. In the most prosaic picture the thrilling sensibilities of the higher powers fetch out the particles of poetry. Things are not discriminated by names. You don't say "Blake is poetic and Nasmyth is prosaic, therefore give us a Blake—give us a Nasmyth."

Guide-posts serve men who don't know the way itself.

To J. F. H.

2nd October.

I FANCY from the barometric observations on all hands that the northern iceberg system of rigour and Polar frost is near to dissolution. I hear mysterious cracks across the snow-fields, and hope presently that the bergs will float away all glistening and melting "where the monstrous narwhal spurts his foamy fountains in the sea."

But what if it is not so? "Shall we go mourn for *that*, my dear?" I was too happy among the solemn North Seas with the Auroras crackling round the skies to be *too* anxious for mere coddling and comfort.

What I was going to say indicates a change in the air. It is three years since I read anything, *i.e.* with more than the intention to distract the mind. This week I have actually read and squared *Timon of Athens*, and *Coriolanus*. Dr. Johnson says that "the *tragedy* of *Coriolanus* is one of the most *amusing* of our author's performances." No one writes a sentence like that nowadays, any more than they wear cocked hats and breeches. "Amusing" had a different meaning then. Shakespeare stands the wonder of all time. Now why? He had small Latin and less Greek. Ben Jonson had large Latin and much Greek; but who really cares for Ben Jonson except literary fogies who pity your ignorance if you say so? It is just *this*: Shakespeare was all *alive*, a nimble spirit like the lightning, who could put "a girdle round the earth in forty minutes" and not feel that he had done anything particular, but at the age of 46 to go to Stratford and buy a bit of property, and loll over the gates, talking to farmers and graziers, and Bill the butcher's boy, and the Squire at the Hall: at home with the Universe. His *sort* of carelessness in his plays reveals the man. When his blood is up he makes heaven and earth bend and deliver up what he wants *on the instant*, and goes crashing through the forest of words like a thunderbolt, crushing them out of shape if they don't fit in, melting moods and tenses, and leaving people to gape at the transformation. If the grammarians object, he goes on like the hero of Jabberwocky

> O frabjus day! Calloo, Callay!
> He chortles in his joy!

He's not going to stop and put their heads on straight. They should have kept out of his way.

The truth is he did not conceive things in words at all. He was a Seer. He first saw the thing or the character, as if he had got out of himself into it, and then with the "noble mould of Marcius" he just drove the words together with a voice of thunder.

> The poet's eye in a fine phrensy rolling
> Did glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven:

Do you think he was a talker; talking people down with his small Latin? He talked, yes; but so as to make everybody "unbolt to him," and he had them ere they were aware by the gift of sympathy. He had what is reported of Mirabeau, *le don terrible de la familiarité*, and caught them without guile. Sure am I of this, that Shakespeare was like *putty* to everybody, and everything, the willing slave, pulled out, patted down, squeezed anyhow, clay to every potter. But he knew by the plastic hand what the nature of the moulder was. Your weak-strong man *butts* and asserts himself, and gets to know nothing and nobody.

To T. A.

29*th October* 1871,
Breakfast Room, 4.45 P.M.

PIANO in this room, accordion in that; both *going*; also mamma explaining aloud to three youngest some

"squares" I drew in margin of W. M. Bunting's life. I never like to stop the dear home-noises when directed to any end, even when they reach a "fair"-like clash and confusion. "Walk up, ladies and gentlemen, this way up to the giant." "Bang!" says the gun. "Clash!" go the cymbals. "Yo Ho!" says the speaking trumpet. Then he has a turn at us. "Never mind the parson and picter-maker. There they go!" What a blessing to be well enough to write quietly! (I forgot to mention the linnet in the cage; bless his little throat.)

But the row will be over soon enough, and there must be no memories of painful and threatening "hushes" and stoppages of the torrent of innocent childish noise.

Bless God likewise for *hard work*, and even for repression in progress. This is a dangerous thing to say; it is like inviting further testing. Only we have not got a High Priest who is provoked by our speeches and ventilators to catch us and trap us. One of the sublimest and most calming thoughts is that He reads the heart and the life straight through. "Lord, thou knowest all things." Peter cut the knot. It would have been a poor case for Peter in *argument*. We are better off with our Saviour's omniscience than with all the best efforts of our best friends. To them I, for one, feel I could never make the crooked straight. We say too much to this man, too little to that. Our promise is greater than our performance, our impulses than our acts; not to men-

tion our varying passions, our mobile loves, and angers, and resentments, and indolences. We mean well, nay, we mean the best, but there is neither time nor power to put things right all round. But Omniscient Love cleaves all like lightning and ends all at a glance.

> O Love, how cheering is thy ray;
> All pain before thy presence flies.

During the last week my fancy has been full of the early boyhood of Charles Dickens. My little Edwin, who is near ten years of age, roasting chestnuts, and Georgey, near twelve, compounding for a piece of my pear, represent that terrible period of his life. Both are childish. Only think of one between those ages having to fight all his own battle without any help of any kind; "no adviser, no consolation, no guidance, so help him God!"

The entire character, life, work, of Dickens, and its total bearings on the interests of the race, form a problem to which my thought is not equal. But this I know, that no good comes from wholesale denunciation and darkened sympathies. "Pure love to every soul of man" is the only basis of true judgments of men. The green fibre of the tobacco plant, the root of the vine, the fires of the volcano, the gases of the slow-running drainage at Londesborough Lodge, are all a part of His work whose "sober spotless mind" constitutes "our heaven on earth." The one thing defined for us is to have that mind.

The following are selections from a note-book written about this period :—

20th November 1871.

A GOOD day at my picture. Glanced at the *Life of Wilkie* by Allan Cunningham. This book, given me by my father in 1843, has been one of the most secretly delightful books in all the world. It has been read and re-read ; and I could now sit down and read over the journals of work in the first volume with appetite, though, like a child with a fairy tale, I know "what is coming" at every step. How long it took to paint the little picture of "The Jew's Harp" I have several times reckoned up, and should like to do it again. None but a professed painter who has made painting his life-work knows the peculiar savour of such inquiries.

> I know each lane and every valley green,
> Dingle, or bushy dell of this wild wood,
> And every bosky bourn from side to side,
> My daily walks, and ancient neighbourhood.

But of late years, the occasional reviving of appetite for Wilkie's Life (so well bethumbed) has raised questions like a flight of fieldfares — questions so solemn, so practical, so home-thrusting, that I often feel as if I were before some judge and jury, and bound to go through them all in self-defence.

Miss Landon, who was popular when I was a youth, and who wrote a poem about Maclise's "Vow of the Peacock" at a time when Maclise took the public by storm—as the public took against him at a later period — Miss Landon wrote some verses

headed "We might have been." If one wanted a bit of fun for social purposes one might write a reply headed, "Why were we not?" Every new touching of Wilkie's Life, not to speak of a thousand incitations, raises these two trains of thought. But why Wilkie? To me, for many reasons. The book came out and was given to me just at the beginning of my career as a painter. It is the most express and detailed painter's life I know anything of. It unfolds the whole secret of success, and the price which must be paid for it; and Wilkie was the absolute type of a man devoted solely to one object in life, and pursuing it with the pertinacity of a bloodhound up to his latest hour on board the steamer from Malta. He was the absolute type of the successful worker. He sowed for what he reaped, and he reaped in full measure that which he sowed. Turner might be placed with him fully in these two respects.

I saw all this at the age of twenty-two; and felt it with as total a force as ever since. My early advantages in some respects were not equal to Wilkie's. He studied at the Trustees' Academy in Edinburgh and at the Royal Academy in London. He was only fifteen when he went to the former. At fifteen I went to Lincoln to study Architecture under E. J. Willson. At school between the ages of eleven and fifteen I had drawn Raffaele's Cartoons and many good things in Indian Ink from the engravings in the Annuals of that period (and delicious things those gem-like steel engravings were). At the age of six-

teen I began to paint in oil, and from life. At eighteen I essayed portraits; and from that time have maintained myself by painting. I studied for a little while at the Royal Academy, quite enough, as I think, for I had been well practised in drawing, and I distinctly remember the keeper speaking of my drawing as "masterly," as well as being told by Phillips the R.A. something as encouraging, and by Jones that "in or out of the Academy I was sure to succeed." From eight years of age and even before, as I can clearly recollect, all my nature was enchained to painting, not simply as an amusement but in a rapturous and enthusiastic way, as high-minded in feeling as if I "rode a horse with wings that would have flown." This full tide of enthusiasm has run through my whole life, and I feel it now as strong as ever.

Putting all these things together, it might reasonably have been expected that, like Wilkie, I should have lived a life of unmixed devotion to painting, and that the result would have been some amount of fame and fortune.

Let me examine my course.

Have I been idle? Not for an hour.

Have I been triflingly employed? I have been on full stretch with the highest employments I could set before my mind and hand. The crucial question comes next. Have I suffered my energies to be diverted from the one object of painting? Answer. Yes and No.

But I will not answer any more questions before I have had time to speak about Wilkie and his career. What did his success cost him? Read his life and you will have a minute account of the way in which his time was spent daily. He did nothing but paint. What he read was only by the way; and though his mind no doubt was "piercing in its energy of investigation" in his own line, yet he was no better than the average small tradesman out of it. Witness his "Lectures" and the small style of his observations generally. Witness his small love for "the great." "To sit at their tables, mon, it is grand." Weak and watery to a great degree outside his art, his life was commonplace except within it. He reaped as he sowed, and we reap the benefit of his sowing also, with untold delight. No blame therefore to Wilkie, and great gain to us.

Perhaps it was no part of his biography to speak of his soul's history, nor was Allan Cunningham the man who could have done it. I see no evidence in his writings that in his youth or manhood his soul was ever awakened within him. There is nothing to distinguish him from the good-natured, moral, canny Scotchman of the world. No doubts as to his course seem to have retarded him for an hour. He leaped into fame at a bound at the early age of twenty-one. He was joined at once to polite society; to the society, in fact, of "the great," and there he dwelt all his years on the earth respected and respectable. His religion, as far as appears, might be summed up

in the concluding sentence of a sermon heard by my friend Mr. Chubb from the lips of Sydney Smith (whose preaching, by the way, Wilkie much admired), "Finally, my brethren, if you wish to die respected, be respectable."

Beyond this depth I see nothing deeper in Wilkie's soul; and I seem to hear an echo, faint and watery as in a cold old mossy well, "Well! what more would you have?" It is this "what more" that is the key, the cross, the crown of my whole history from that year 1843 to this present time.

29th November 1871.

Have got Leslie's *Life of Constable*. The half-rapturous zest, secret and exceeding, of such a book, every inflection of which is delightful! I love the concentrated love of Constable. The rambling, travelling, widespread, insatiate, hasty spirit misses of art's greatest aim (so named by Wordsworth), *Tranquillity*. If Pascal read one book (Montaigne), surely one Sussex Valley is enough for one life. A couplet from the "Farmer's Boy" quoted in an old Academy Catalogue has stuck to me for thirty years.

> Small was his charge, no wilds had they to roam,
> But bright enclosures circling round their home.

When we consider that a whole sky, through all the seasons, is open to one vale, with its stars and sun and moon and clouds of all measures and manners and colours, what more can an immortal mind desire?

The same tree, well-beloved and honoured, is twenty trees from twenty different points of view. But in a valley there are many trees, and so, many different combinations. Add the hills, the stream, the cottages, the bridges. Ring the changes on sky and earth in the sheltered, single vale, and what more can you long for? If eight bells will yield so many changes, what of a Sussex valley?

30*th November*, 9 P.M.

READING Constable's Life with varying feelings. To me the *pinch* of such reading is in the confirmation of certain conclusions about the practice of painting in England. The variations and uncertainties of opinion for its own sake I care nothing for; they do not agitate me. They are interesting, and so much is to be said on all sides. But when I see that the most highly-cultivated intellects are often the feeblest possible judges of painting; that success may be kept down for a lifetime, and opportunities and encouragements denied for want of a fair judgment; that critics are largely "handled" and used indirectly by the men of push and ambition; and that without their aid, large or even moderate success is next to impossible; that any measure of original thought is looked on coldly, even among the best judges, till it prevails by very gradual acceptance (note Sir G. Beaumont's entire difference from Constable, as to the soundness of his art, and compare Sir G. B.'s opinions with those of Leslie on this subject); that the

painter's strength lies in waiting and in silence (seeking for commissions only defeating its own object); there is apt to creep over me a feeling almost weird and shuddering, such as is symbolised by such a circumstance as the being locked at twilight in a solitary building about which a man has been happily and long wandering, and which he entered as a treasure house of science or art, or as when an imperfectly informed settler finds himself enclosed by dangers of the woods or hostile tribes where he expected to found a peaceful settlement.

2nd December 1871.

Bought a new box of water colours; then walked on to National Gallery and studied Constable's "Cornfield." Constable was fifty years old when he painted it, and it is in the maturity of his solemn, sober, russet way of thinking among "hamlets brown and dim discovered spires," hearing "their simple bell."

No eloquence could express my personal thankfulness for the National Gallery and the Museum at S. Kensington. To have examples of all the best masters, ancient and modern, at command, as free of access as if they were hung in your own house and better illuminated, is so delightful that to a painter no mental feast is equal to it. In the lives of Wilkie and Constable we read of the occasional privilege of studying a few of these very things at "Angerstein's," "Sir Geo. Beaumont's," "Peel's," etc. There is a pleasant notice in Constable's Letters of a visit to

Coleorton, the seat of Sir G. Beaumont, and of his rapture at being in daily converse with Claude's "Narcissus and Echo," his "Annunciation," his "Cephalus and Procris," and the Field Study with the piping shepherd. Yet for years and years I have conned these very works with the utmost leisure. One of the rarest privileges of 25 years ago was to know some one who knew some one else who had been permitted to go and see "Turner's Gallery" in the mysterious house in Queen Anne's Street, with its blind, windowless frontage—a haunted house to all young painters. The ear drank in the lightest echoes of report as to the material of the Gallery. But for years all the Arcana have been laid bare—nay even his sketches and his studies are all anatomically arranged on the walls of those fairy rooms at South Kensington, and "The Crossing the Brook," "The Frosty Morning," and all the mystic contents of "Turner's Gallery" are largely assimilated by many minds.

To run in to the National Gallery in passing, merely to see, for example, the relative depth of colour in the corner of that little Claude (The Annunciation) which Sir G. Beaumont loved so well that he carried it with him whenever he removed to his various residences, gives the feeling of the Fairy Tales having come true. And then the sketches at S. K. which fit themselves to every conceivable mood, done in pencil, in pen and ink, in water colour, in oil, in sepia—done elaborately or slightly, in every sort of temper and manner, from the very earliest uncertain

scribbles of a first thought to the cautious preliminaries of the picture itself! Sketches in chalk are here which Gainsborough used to make in his tranquil evenings at home, now framed in battered, smoke-toned, old-fashioned frames, brought out of dusky rooms in town and country; Wilkie's fastidious scratchings of various ways of putting in the background of "Duncan Gray," and his not facile attempts to hit off Scottish harvest-women in pencil, at which work many a score of our draughtsmen for periodicals would beat him hollow in these days! But in this direction nothing can equal those ebony stands in the Sheepshanks rooms, in which, as in a revolving black letter-book, are mounted the studies of Mulready the Conscientious, the man who, from the day when he knocked at the door of Banks the Sculptor and wiped his feet so carefully that he won the heart of the old housekeeper when he was a boy, down to the green old age when he worked as patiently as Gerhard Dow at the later pictures in the Vernon Gallery, thought of nothing but how to "paint it well."

All this is such a store of wealth to the painter that tongue cannot utter it. Certainly as I write the pleasure grows "for ever rising with the rising mind," and I am led to recall almost in a spirit of devotion the inscription so appropriately gilded round the dome of the Royal Academy—

> The hearts of men which fondly here admire
> Fair seeming shows may lift themselves up higher,
> And learn to love with zealous humble duty,
> The eternal fountain of that heavenly beauty.

No poem I know gives so good an image of the pleasures of painting, especially of Water Colour painting, as "The Brook" by Tennyson. It comes very near the expression of the changeful inward delight which sings on under all skies, and in all weathers, to the Sea.

> Men may come and men may go ;
> But I go on for ever.

When, after a new phase of work, say a summer evening churchyard with the last gleams slanting up the steep roof, the solitary old rustic with his "short and simple annals" standing in the shade, and reading the inscription on the wooden memorial of "the village Hampden" whom he knew in his boyhood—when after finishing such a work, his pencil loitering, as the light declines in his studio, over the ivies and brier-bindings of the heaving mossy resting-places, or staining the lichens more deeply on the stones, he at length writes his own name on tomb or grassy hillock, to remain there for perhaps two centuries, there is a thrill of pleasure which has a whispering and weird power in it. "To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new." Next week, he solemnly records his name in a snowdrift, the winds driving, the sheep huddling, the "shepherd blowing his nail." From change to change—

> I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance—

never twice the same. There are bitternesses in the

pursuit of Painting at times, but its joys are indescribable and endless.

> Men may come and men may go;
> But I go on for ever.

To C. M.

Long habit gives a charm of antiquity to the charm of action. To get out a new ventilator and date it outside, or being stirred in spirit to make a new square, there to remain and become a rich, ripe, old one, to mark its solemn boundaries, the hedges and bulwarks of the idea then first beginning its outward life—these two confluent and effluent habits have become, perhaps, the most enchanting resorts of mental life in the course of years.

The other day I went to see one of our older members who is sick and not likely to recover. Small cottage, neat and tidy room. She is deaf, the wife of a bootmaker (cobbler, let us say), and has had a struggling life of hard work with a large family, who have all "turned out well." I have seen two of them die happy, and now God calls her home, and she has no words to express her joy and the sense of having every blessing and abounding. She is afraid to boast, for "she feels herself so sinful; but then, looking to Jesus is *so* easy." She is "never lonely, night or day." Here is a soul to whom "an abundant entrance" is being administered, and here is a life that has fulfilled life's noblest ends.

All this with no adjuncts reads well, and God, and Christ, and the angels, and the cloud of witnesses inquire no more. But Satan, and fallen man, and the world and its fashions and ways go farther and inquire, "How did the daily life of these people look?" Look? Why, mean and depressing, of course; without a spark of outward attractiveness. She had a quiet, homely, self-contained dignity for a small tradesman's wife, but all was of the lowliest and, except to the purged eye, forbidding.

One of the truths that is opening out more and more to me is the relation of taste and culture to the religious life. Without care we are entangled in a sense of discrepancy, as if they were *opposed*, and when we see—what is an awful and undoubted fact—that the poor and despised dwell in the light far more than the rich and wise, it becomes still more puzzling. The key seems to be furnished in the central idea of *true* culture. I am told that Goethe defines genius as "being a right appreciation of the situation"—*i.e.* I judge, a perfect sympathy. Here is the detector. Any touch of "Stand off, I am holier, wiser, more refined, more respectable than thou," is like a green precipitate which shows false culture *somewhere*: and it abounds. Antagonism—exchange of merits, admire me and I'll admire you—is the rule.

But the supreme correlative of this is in the one "perfect gentleman" (as Rousseau calls Christ), the "fairest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely," who "had not where to lay his head," and whose best

reputation was that He was "the friend of publicans and sinners." We see Him near to the dying woman I have written about, as if He had laid aside all interests and histories but hers; so He comes to each of us, in our own way.

I have been commanded to be smitten on the mouth on the subject of art a thousand times: its desirableness, its relative value, its actual uses. Men of science have been insensible and indifferent. Good men (and those often alive to percentages) have been solemnly "dead" to it. The only one who, since I first felt the delightful stirrings of it at five years old, up to now, has never interposed one thwarting thought out of His omniscience, is the Lord Jesus, and He shows me now more clearly than ever that true art, as opposed to its neglect, is the best preparation for the class-room, and the closet, and the sanctuary; for it is simply a more and more complete "appreciation of the situation"; tending, therefore, to an universal simplicity of life, and to a full reception of all impressions. False culture is confined to partial regions of the nature; the flesh, the eye, the pride of life. True culture reaches all the powers, the conscience, and the soul.

It might sound strange to start the thesis in a church assembly, with such material as we have, but I make no doubt of it (as I look on the question) that perfect Science and Art, and perfect Holiness, as existing in a given being (for of course Holiness is not objective), mean pretty much the same thing.

(Cries of Oh! Oh! from the opposition on both sides.)

After a visit to the Old Masters Exhibition at Burlington House, he writes in his note-book :—

5th January 1872.

If any Art teaches by example rather than by precept it is the Art of Painting. When Turner was visitor at the R.A., and was asked "How?" by a student, his reply was "Suppose you *look*." To those who have the power of looking and the will to look Academies of Art are useless; often worse than useless, for they bind burdens on the shoulders of sensitive and original men which oppress without enriching them. In what school of Art did Constable, Turner, Danby acquire their peculiar powers? All the vocal, or written, or printed instructions in the world could not empower a man to feel, and to paint such a piece of sublime rusticity as Constable's "White Horse," or (and what an intellectual ocean lies between these two works!) Danby's "Calypso mourning the departure of Ulysses." Yet which, on the whole, is the finer and more important work? A saying of Constable's best answers this question: "Fine pictures neither need nor admit of comparison." Collins's "Cherry Seller" differs from the two former by an almost equal distance, though there is perhaps more essential affinity between the Collins and the Constable than between the Collins and the Danby. But what dogmas would express the essen-

tials of any of the three? In what consists that solemn reflective grandeur of rural peace—"ancient peace"—in the two cottages, the river bank, the disappearing barge with the white horse *in* it, not pulling it? Men might paint ten thousand pictures with two cottages by a river, a barge and a white horse, and they should be feeble and worthless. Nay, more, hundreds of painters since Constable could have united the material of the picture better. That is a blotch, and not much like a dock leaf in the foreground, and the rest of the work is equally obscure as a mere matter of photographic resemblance. Whence then, that mystic overruling charm? Have we not felt something of the same influence when in some recess of life, far away in the country's heart, on a gray afternoon we have dreamily watched the rain-waggons of the sky, the large clouds of silver gray, slow moving, drawn by their slow "White Horses"? Who shall tell these influences on the moralising day-dreams of the hour and place. But in this picture we have their echoes fixed and translated on canvas. If they have never been felt, and if the picture has no meaning to the spectator, it is little matter, the picture will never complain, it will hang on the wall in pathetic silence for centuries; not bating a jot of that which it has, and is; nor modifying its measured life laid there by Constable long years ago, faithful to its grave trust: the same as when Archdeacon Fisher resolved to buy it: the same as when it "lit up that side of the room just above

the ogee moulding" in the long since departed Archdeacon's home, and when his wife glanced from it to the garden and "saw the same kind of look in both": the same as when the Parisians of 1825, or thereabouts, crowded round it, and the Parisian critics fought over it, and it, with others of Constable's work, began to form a French school of landscape when as yet in his mother country her rustic son was unregarded and depreciated. Its life is secretly defended. It is forbidden to perish. We may burn our copy of Shakespeare, but we must not lay hands on Constable's "White Horse" when the hoary tints of true fame gather (as the lichens and weather stains encrust and gild an abbey) over a picture that has touched the heart of the world. What man in his senses dare be more than its reverent custodian to pass it forward to the hands of posterity? All *teaching* of the secrets of such works is vain, all analysis except of the eye and the soul is vain. The kings of Art (the men who "can") read such books with thoughtful ease. But all such learn in no school, nor can they be taught.

One of the settled mental comforts of a painter's life is when by a "scientific use of the imagination" he sees into the silent real *life* of a picture. Take the "Portrait of an old lady" by Rembrandt in this Old Masters Exhibition. Conceive of its inception, the "sittings," the completion, the signing which marked it the child of Rembrandt for age on age. Fancy the Burgomaster's positivity as to its defects, and the Artist's friends applause of its merits, while

it hung with just the same melancholy unchangeable look surcharged with mind which had arranged its pigments at their proper angles. Follow the Burgomaster to his marble tomb and lay him silent, long ago, and the Artist's friend to his wooden cross and green turf. Grow up a new generation of observers for whom the canvas presents the same melancholy face and the pigments at the same angles of incidence! How impassive it is! Hear the passionate praise and the full blowing blame of ages, both collapsing into "the portion of weeds and worn-out faces." At length in December 1871 the canvas is ordered out, like Rossell, on a raw morning, to be fired at at Burlington House by "the largest circulation in the world." The Critic heaves and blows like "the huge bush-bearded Baron." Then he *writes* and prints, and "the largest circulation in the world" brings it me for a penny, and the following is part of his heaving and blowing:—

"That this picture must have been painted under some mental distress like Scott's *Count Robert of Paris*," and that "there is much yet to be unravelled in the life of Rembrandt." As if from the expression of the faces of his pictures, or their execution you could make out the history of a painter!

To J. F. H.

SOUTHPORT, 25*th January* 1872.

RECEIVED your post-card. The sight of your hand-writing has so long been dear to me that it is among my life treasures; and I say or write no such

things sentimentally or extravagantly. Life, and its "lines in pleasant places," is far too sweet and solemn to trifle with, even in trifles; and so Personage, and Interview, and Looks, and Smiles, and Tokens, and Communications, and all that makes up the sum of earthly Unions, Friendships, Loves, are no mere passing accidents, but *monumental things* which can never, never pass away.

Even in our ashin old is fire-y-reke.

As to the Hates, Dislikes, Apathies, and Antipathies of life (the two last are good things), its Recriminations and vain Reprisals, there is no room for them towards any, when once the soul thus catches sight of the *good of life*. The bush burns rosy and lambent, and is not consumed.

Mr. Stead's dining-room; alone. 31*st January*.

THERE is actually gone a whole twelfth of another year! Something of the bewilderment of the dream comes across the mind, as when dissolving views wrestle with one another till we know not which is to prevail, except by our knowledge of sequence. What, as I wrote, brought up the figure of *you* across the disc, as I saw you years ago? In which of the four chambers of the brain has that image been lying all these years; only now and then coming and sitting and sinking and fading into its safe retirement? All the tears of the muses cannot express these wonders—this pathos of life. It would be too great but for a little faith.

There is an infinite sea, and an endless shore, and that little *dot* (vastly too big in my square) is Humanity among the numberless sands, the countless waves, and the diapason of Eternity.

> Doth not all that is
> Press on thy head and heart,
> And visibly, invisibly,
> Weave its mysterious chain
> Eternally around thee?

Now and then this small speck, replete with sensation and sensibility, is caught as by a whirlwind from the devious life of the sands and plunged into the billows of the sea in storm, and tosses as helpless in the waves, as lonely on the sands. Yet it does not perish there. By some power it is lifted out of the storm and restored to its ordinary life of wandering alone. But it cannot choose its lot, nor resist the powers that surround it. Why does its littleness not drive it to despair: cause it to curl like a sand-worm into some small grave on the windy wastes and disappear? "What is man that Thou takest account of him?" Here is the glory and loveliness of the strength. "*Thou* takest account of him." So here is life. This *is* life. That little dot on the shore is small as a mathematical point; but such a point is the centre of a circle of power and beauty whose lines of radiations go out to the ends of the earth and beyond it, never reaching the circumference—

> Whose margin fades
> For ever and ever, as they move—

Powers, which are not appendages, strike through every living line, and Man is safe in God.

To F. J. S.

Last night read Carlyle's *Niagara*, and after that heard James Calvert of Fiji tell an unvarnished tale of what simple faith in Christ had *done* among men-eaters and murderers. It is pleasant to be catholic and give honour to whom honour is due. Still it is right to be just to our own judgment. I see nothing in Carlyle that I don't see much better said in the New Testament, and with the unspeakable advantage of an infallible recipe for *doing it*. A friend of mine writes, "The advantage of the Gospel is that it enables the humblest man to do what only the hero can do without it."

Carlyle's Drill—all the world marching and wheeling and getting ready to fight! Whereas the fisherman Peter lays bonds and yokes on men which *drill* a man from *within*, and he fears God and honours the King, and knows his place, and doesn't put sham work into his harness or his buildings. I know such men by scores and hundreds, and feel sure that there are tens of thousands.

We don't want eloquent howling to show man "what is good," or to do justice, or love mercy, or walk humbly with God and man. I will back James Calvert of Fiji against a troop of Carlyles for the actual accomplishment of the chief good.

All this with much admiration of Carlyle nevertheless.

11*th February.*

For a long time past I have seen into a something most wondrous, in what I fear so many think the *accident* of our circles of friends. It is no accident. If it be true, "He that receiveth you receiveth me," in one sense, it is also in this. God draws nigh in our friend-circles.

> Why hast thou cast our lot
> In the same age and place?
> And why together brought
> To see each other's face?

We are sent to operate on each other and to be operated on; "diamond cut diamond." It is not good for man to be alone. The effect of this view ought to be most important both in respect to our esteeming of the heavenly gift and in respect of our behaviour. We must "show ourselves friendly." For want of this recognition of "God with us" in our friends great harm is done. Temper is allowed to thwart God's intentions, neglect is allowed to run it to waste, insensibility to miss its profoundest lessons; so life remains a mean and weary thing. It is well to study all this deeply, to watch the pillar of cloud and fire. Contented *limitation* is one of its elements, an unambitious spirit in regard to it—the not-too-much, the not-too-many.

To C. M.

Touched with a sympathy within,
He knows our feeble frame.

Every believer realises by experience that Christ is the only perfect sympathiser. "I'm not perfectly understood," says everybody in fact. But if you are a believer you are perfectly understood. Christ is the only one who never expects you to be other than *yourself*, and He puts in abeyance towards you all but what is like you. He takes your view of things, and mentions no other. He takes the old woman's view of things by the wash-tub, and has a great interest in wash powder; Sir Isaac Newton's view of things, and wings among the stars with him; the artist's view, and feeds among the lilies; the lawyer's, and shares the justice of things. But He never plays the lawyer or the philosopher or the artist to the old woman. He is above that littleness.

10*th April* 1872.

Perhaps some suffer greater alternations of pleasure and pain than others. Things come with a cutting force from books and life and thought. In Thomas Cooper's *Autobiography*, last night, I got the poor Leicester "stockingers," who only earned 4s. 6d. a week, dug into me. These and the like images make the simple enjoyment of life a thing to be held in motion by the strong hand of reason overmastering feeling and imagination. "You won't

mend matters by being miserable about what you can't help."

How much depends on the way you put things to yourself. In the family read that part of the Sermon on the Mount which forbids care, and went to work humbly and thankfully, glad to be able by ever so much labour to paint a picture worth a few pounds. "Another Gospel" might have made me look on myself as a neglected "genius," and I might have sworn bitterly all day, or dropped work in disgust and gone off loafing to a studio to infect some other "genius" with pride and discontent. But "Bless the Lord, O my soul!" No; quite the reverse. How carefully I painted my market woman with her hens in a basket, thankful not to be a Leicester stockinger at 4s. 6d. a week; and when a tired feeling came over me a flush of divine philosophy (not harsh nor crabbed as dull fools suppose, but musical as is Apollo's lute) sent me on spinning again, running and not weary, walking and not faint.

But the foundation of all this is the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone. Whence else could come all this renewing of the youth and strength but from these deep springs, and whence the access of the living waters unless the rock be smitten by discipline and chastening?

29th April.

The strong ambitious young man envies the establishment, the wealth, the fame of the old. The

old envies the strength and freshness of the young. They each want to conjoin the two ends of life, and have the joys of both ends. They can't. Indeed, each life must be cast into an equation of all its elements as related to its great purport, which is eternal. It matters little at what stage of his little round of life a man is just now found. If he be just now young, he is fast coming to age; if old, he has had what the young are now having

> I remember, when I think
> That my youth was half divine.

No man has two youths: no man has less than one. Will a thinking man beg for the probation of youth twice over? The proper Ego from the centre of volition, which is fairly located equidistant from the various periods of his allotted life, is that which yields up the full answer of life. The Ancient of Days, as in Blake's grand design, takes His golden compass. He alone knows what Radius will touch all the possibilities of volition, some natures needing more expansion than others. With that radius He strikes the circle of individual life, and volition decides its own destiny.

7th May.

Now I say, Make a science of your love. Search out your loves, for there is the fulfilling of your law of life. You love Tennyson's *Claribel*; another man swears at you for it, and turns again and rends you. Never mind him. The "golden furze brings tears

into the eyes of Linnæus," and the City man wants to know what the driveller is blubbering about, and asks for a vote for the ward of Grubbery cum Cash, and that you should join him in a "nip of brandy." Never mind him. He'll be down a steep place into the sea ere long, and the world will spin smoothly on its axis as before. This light of love will develop wonders. There is no fear in love. What is your beloved more than another man's beloved?

Nothing; but it is *yours*.

One can't paint after the first day at the R.A. One ought not to try, the impressions are so powerful and multitudinous. Millais's landscapes alone are like a discharge of a park of artillery. The consummate intelligence of his observation is inspiriting. That is just how things look to a keen, unprejudiced eye, not ruled by convention nor overruled by subjective feeling or poetic passion. "Dreams that wave before the half-shut eye" are another life, live in another world. But the eyes of Millais are wide open to this world, and they will most fully recognise the truth and beauty of his work who love Nature most and know her best.

To T. A.

16*th June* 1872.

Spite of resolutions not to read at all, the volume of *Middlemarch* from Mudie's tickles me like a trout, and at last George Eliot lays me gasping on the grass. She is like Thoreau, who was *en rapport*, in a

sort of mesmeric way, with the spirit of Nature. He could fetch up any fish he liked with his hand, show it, and let it swim again. The fish came to him. What attracted me in this book was what attracted me to Bethnal Green Museum again, and will take me yet again—some instances of true or curious art. Many a man can take a six-foot canvas and paint you two deer lying down in a bit of forest, and you shall not be able to find a single fault. Nay, if the painter's *friend* has fetched you to see it you shall say, "Those ferns are wonderful, look how he has done the cold skylight on the tips and the golden light shining through," and next you (as I heard at the R.A. concerning the ferns in Vicat Cole's "Noon"), the "fat-faced Edward Bull," shall say in a voice welling up through thick oil, "Those ferns are ofly jolly, they are glaw-yus." But the painter's friend is not contented, and says with illogical ellipsis, "What's the matter with the deer?" But you turn in mild surprise, concealing a half yawn with your catalogue, and answer, "I never said anything about the deer; they are very well done indeed."

But Rosa Bonheur shall take a twelve-inch panel and put a drift of thin brown over it and paint you—not by any means in a juggling way, but rather with simple, childlike pains—two deer which you shall never forget.

"But what's the difference?" Shall I begin to explain the difference between the art of Harrison Ainsworth and George Eliot?

Good art is stimulating: bad is depressing. When I go to some of my art friends I come away in a wet blanket. Going to D. G. R., to Brown, Burne Jones, Boyce (appetising Boyce, he has a charm of his own), Shields, the Linnells — all is charm and zest and appetite, kindling pleasant electric shocks of life. None of these men can touch paper, pen, lead pencil, chalk, or brush, but something fresh, natural, powerful, oozes out at their finger ends. So with George Eliot's *pen*: 'tis all *Nature*. She does not prejudice you by comment, yet how you love or hate her characters with more or less of that veiling prudence which life compels in loving and hating! The book is crammed with wisdom, wit, and tenderness, and the style is pellucid and free from strain.

18*th June.*

Our way there is a preponderance of lions. On some of the grandiose villas they are of marble, and they stand up as large as life, Lion and Lioness, on either side of Mr. John Jones' classic door. And the temper they show! Nothing will pacify them. To all the guests they show their teeth, and one wonders what there is our way to put them out of temper to that extent. It's not the sublimity of the Nemean lion "'gainst thee, thou lamb, that standest as his prey." It is sheer nastiness, and it weighs on me.

But, as a rule, our lions are not like that. They are large and round in the head, short in the body, most amiable in temper. They are vegetarians, without the least doubt: for as to their eating a lamb, or

even such a thing as a lamb chop, look at their faces and you will see the impossibility at once. This wants accounting for. I place it to domestication on door-steps, to the mollifying influence of babies, nurse-maids, perambulators, and the incidents of suburban door-steps generally. There are other influences, among which I put coats of paint in a high rank. Boiled oil and drab paint are wonderful mollifiers. I know one lion who has been on the same door-step for eighteen years. How much longer I dare not say. Every spring he has received his boiled oil and drab, and he is a sort of boiled lion. He glistens for three months always, after that he has nine months of comparative dulness. But the sense of twenty coats of the best oil paint makes him all we could wish to see in a lion. And yet, I don't know how it is, there is a something below all this which restrains you when you are thinking too lightly of him, a warning twinkle, a feeling that it might be possible to go too far, and that the bound once passed, it were a pity of your life. *Prima facie*, or *a priori*—for I love to set forth a classical spirit—you would not have predicated that Stoke Newington was "arida nutrix leonum"; but misconceptions of that nature are prevalent among men. We often misjudge both persons and localities.

30th July.

Finished *Middlemarch*, Part IV., to-day. All "like life," but in a far other than the Dickens sense. You are not simply amused by it, you are made to think and feel and laugh and wonder and pity; and

if you are not rapped on the knuckles it is because you are an exception to the weak folks, the proud folks, the indolent folks, of which the world is full. You stand a glorious exception.

One of the phases of life George Eliot is masterly in treating, viz. Reasoning and Action on suppressed premises. Life is full of fine snares and pitfalls for the unwary, and G. E. has an eye for them. Casaubon's life-work is a grand parable—a man not sure of himself, whose "Key to all the Mythologies" won't go into the keyhole.

Glad to get your friendly letter. It was like the coming of Titus [2 Cor. vii. 6]. I think Providence in these days often sends Titus by post.

To C. M.

30th July.

Chapel. Long before time.

I SUPPOSE I ought to reckon (and do reckon) to-day's intellectual enjoyment perfect.

Painting, painting in water colours, point by point, an Arcadian vale, with a shepherd and nymph, with all the sensations (probably) of Theocritus. I don't forget or undervalue this element of life. But fancy Theocritus a methodist Class Leader, inwardly examining his conduct, his heart, his "way," and not able to be satisfied with many things in it,—and the father of six children whose "conversion" is to him the principal thing. But this was *the fact*; the one a running accompaniment of the other. Theocritus, "piping down the valleys wild," catching every

breath of Nature, its glooms, its exhilarations, its pensiveness, its haunted influences—comes as near perhaps to my typical and professional mental state as need be.

"The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto *all* men," Theocritus included; is as eminently fitted to save him as the Philippian jailor; and indeed his Idyllic joys are vastly enhanced by it. There is no clashing in his mind. But the union is hard to explain to "small shopkeepers." What matter! The green pastures, the still waters, are eminently poetic, pastoral, and idyllic.

There comes in old Father Barnes. He looks like *Fagin*. He is eighty-six. Can hardly speak for coughing. Yet I much question, whether, if his soul were shown instead of his body, we should not all look poor beside him.

When Job said, "Though He slay me yet will I trust in Him," no wealth could enrich him after that. He had reached his climax. "The mind in its own place."

To learn the art of protracted patience, to learn to do work well for its own sake, to learn to be contented with very moderate remuneration, and not to be betrayed into excited hopes or greedy desires—this is better "than thousands of gold and silver." Yet this is easier to talk about than to practise.

To T. A.

27th November.

He (Coleridge) raised a mortal to the skies,
She (George Eliot) drew an angel down.

In reading a page or two before breakfast of a careful essay by Shairp of St. Andrews on Coleridge, in which he shows how Coleridge, broken down by a sense of sin, accepted Christ as a Saviour, and found the peace of God, the setting forth of redemption so quietly and soothingly suited my soul, strengthening me for work and for enjoyment, and I rode high on the white horse of salvation.

But when last evening in the quiet retirement of the studio I read Part VII. of *Middlemarch* right through, a counter-current ran through me, and agitated the soul. The subtle entanglements of sin, holding a man by its cords, the fatal proclivities of evil, beginning in weakness or bolstered up by pride (Fred Vincy, Lydgate); the decline and fall of the sinner; coarse and brutal worldliness which raps out oaths and lives in wine and wantonness, yet does nothing unbecoming "a gentleman," and so denounces the evangelical hypocrite (Hawley, etc.); the slippery, and, so to speak, greasy sin of the more brutish among the people (Bainbridge, Horrock, Raffles) taking up its parable against Bulstrode; the cold, helpless complications of home life where a shallow nature is linked to a grand one (Rosamond, Lydgate) bringing down the Huxley sort of strength to opium and billiards and borrowing, thwarting all the intellect and defeating the life—even the nobility of the Garths becomes mainly a rebuke all round:—the intense vividness and power and beauty of the handling of all this I must say had

a wretched effect on my mind and robbed me of some sleep by the bitter outflowings of its applications.

Down I fell from my white horse into the mud. The truth is, that with all my deep joys of salvation, the

> Meddling intellect
> Misshapes the beauteous forms of things,
> I murder to dissect.

Alas, how little a young man, who lets his heart cheer him in the days of his youth, knows of the rays of Bethlehem which are to "blind the dusky eyes" of his sins as the light increases!

I hope in your preaching you will well set forth this sowing to the flesh and its necessary harvest, as a preliminary to the full salvation which is over against it: Naaman's leprosy replaced by the flesh of a little child.

It is strange how in the life of the soul two opposite conditions may co-exist. "Lovely peace with plenty crowned" may walk hand in hand with "confusion of face"; and certain of the natural offshoots and consequences of sin may spring among the "flowers of Eden, fruits of grace." A certain *class* of sorrows comes with Evangelical Repentance and Faith. Your Hawleys and Bainbridges pass on easily and unrebuked; your Peters are twitted even by maids of all work: "Thou also!" Mrs. Dollop, at the Tankard, knows more about "some folks" than "they would like to say prayer for," and Crabbe, the glazier, "by

what he can make out," doesn't see why *Peter* should reprove a man for swearing and lying.

All right. "Put it down in thy Gospel, O Mark, that I denied Him with oaths and curses, and that I went out and wept bitterly, and that, though now I see Him not, yet believing, I rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

11.30. And now I go to my work, shorn of my beams, not glorying. I don't know whether to thank G. E., or any one, for Art like this,—for Vivisection with no touch of the Healer. But do thou, O T. A., the more preach the grace that brings salvation.

To F. J. S.

THE more I ponder your kind letter the more I am pleased with it. If I had wanted in a few words to say what I (intellectually) live for, have lived for, mean to live for, it is just what you have struck in the bull's eye. While intending to be faithful to my gifts, to sketch and study from nature continually, even for the smallest things—weeds and stones, and the mere winkings of nature—I propose not to suggest any measure or manner of competition for the prizes of art. Let this man do this better and the other man do the other better, I will spend thought and breath in his praise, but I will not set up against him. I utterly disclaim more than a certain amount of regard for technical excellence in any single direction. The white umbrella at Bettws-y-Coed shall have my most respectful bow in passing, but I never dwelt

under it, and never meant, or mean to do. No "Properties" will ever adorn or cumber my studio, nor apt models grow rigid while I do the Pronator Rotundus more expressively (yet I have models for all that is of any importance). No, my whole life has begun at another end. If such a conception be allowable, it is as if thirty years ago I had built a burning fiery furnace in a "black country," all shale and cinder to the foot of the traveller, into which everything was cast, "coats, hosen, and hats." Out of this in due time comes this composite something which you have so well recognised: an "impression." To my own thought and desire this is the only sort of thing which I inwardly denominate Art. I know it is open to objections, to depreciations, to misapprehensions, to all sorts of challenge and scorn. And certainly the market element of it has been my sorrow and fear and suffering.

To J. S. B.

No man of art ever received such an apotheosis as Turner has received from Ruskin, so it is impossible to *expound* him further. But to *know* him is more than a library full of Ruskin. It is as the Queen of Sheba's exclamation, "The half has not been told." I have had the good fortune to see several collections of his works: that of Fawkes of Farnley near Leeds, of Windus, of Ruskin, and others scattered here and there. Fawkes even showed me what he is so chary of showing, and what he wouldn't sell for any money to Ruskin—a locked-up collection of Turner's studies,

quite marvellous. So with certain splendid Turners in the possession of Miller of Liverpool.

It is the sum total of Turner that knocks you over. No landscape painter ever came near him as a whole. To know and have before the mind what he *did* gives an incessant thrill of awe. What "large-browed Verulam, the King of those who know," was to literature, that Turner was among Landscape Painters. I don't *love* Turner. In seeing Lord Thurlow, who "looked wiser than any man ever was," one might stare and stare with wonder and a sort of fear, but one's heart would be far away somewhere else. The unfaltering, unflagging, unresting energy of Turner is appalling; yet I see scarce a trace of the love of humanity in his work. Men, women, children, to him were figures. He put them in crowds, and seemed to hate them, or to despise them. He never knew just the right bend and attitude of thought, or tender regard, or noble gesture. A wooden, soul-less apprehension of their ways runs through all. As masses, as colour, as composition, as natural occupants of the scene, he placed them well; but he loved them not. I distinguish, observe, as between mind, of which his work is only too full, and soul and heart.

To Mrs. T.

What I should greatly deprecate as a member of the Church of Christ, especially as a Methodist class-leader, would be to live a life exceptional at all. There is nothing for which I feel more thankful than

the fact that I have hold of the sympathies of many to whom I could not in the least explain what I have been writing. To see a perplexed look on the faces of my members—especially on those of the postman, policeman, carpenter, servant-girl, or chestnut-seller, would be a great pain. But I never *do* see it, and hope I never may. Out of the complex experiences of my own life has come a better understanding of the lives of others—of the essential as separable from the accidental — of what really is "the pillar and ground of the truth," and I have much boldness in the faith of Christ as the result of the difficulties, moral and mental, through which I attained it, and hold it.

For between thirteen and fourteen years I have been a class-leader, and have found in the work an unfailing and an increasing peacefulness and rest. I trace much of my enjoyment and calm equable experience in the class to these quiet evening hours with my books. They keep my work constantly up before my mind and heart. Indeed I carry this aspect of the subject much further; for my hymn books, Bible, and other repositories are full of secreted "squares" of individual class-meetings and other occasions, dated, and with the members sitting as they sat, and with budding squares from them of any subject that gave special vitality to the occasion. These things do not perish. I often come across them when after other game, in the "lands where not a leaf is dumb." In this way life becomes a closely-woven web, "Each

part doth call the furthest brother," and it is partly in this weft and woof that I reach the amount of equanimity which, in spite of my chances against it, I do in fact enjoy. I have such a multitude of *escapes* that in alternations of dogged labour, of excited imagination, of inward fun (the more precious for repression), of steadily recurring engagements—

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance.

Now ventilating to Mansford, to Mrs. Hall, to J. F. Hall, to Mr. Stead, to Mr. Akroyd, to Rossetti, to Shields, to Mr. Budgett, to you; now squaring: sometimes in the London *Encyclopædia*, which is a Hyrcinian forest; or in the *Biographical Dictionary*, which is a forest of Ardennes; or in my Bible, which is a vast Holy Land; or in my hymn books, which are a sort of Italy; or in my historical or chronological books, which are a sort of British Museum; or in Smith's *Dictionaries*, which are like "the world as known to the ancients"; or in lexicons or dictionaries, which are like deserts of pebbly words; or among the poets, which are like walking in groves and meadows and by streams. This, and going to exhibitions and to my friends' houses, with now and then a dinner-party, gives such organised variety to life that it would cure an inveterate hypochondria.

To C. M.

The sight of W. B. Scott's studio last Friday was inwardly as romantic and affecting as the two little

biographies of Liversedge and Burnet which, at seventeen years old, I used to read among the old helmets and breastplates in E. J. Willson's study at Lincoln.

Passing out at the back of W. B. S.'s house, you walk under a winding covered verandah to his studio. The windows are to the north, and their bottom ten feet from the ground. A profound silence reigns, just such as the painter needs. The roof has been raised high with dark oaken rafters, the walls are dark. But what gives the solemn charm is that three of David Scott's ambitious, imperfect, yet grand unsold works (for he sold but little), hang on three of the studio walls. On one, "Achilles swearing by the manes of Patroclus." Another I forget the subject of; the third hangs high in the dusk over the door, "Lady Macbeth" smearing the grooms with blood from her dripping dagger. There they are; deep in colour, blistered with the sun, mildewy, brown, in solemn, energetic, heavy epic, needing the interpretation of much knowledge and sympathy. There is scarce any one who would buy them, though many would admire and be impressed by them. They are too big to buy at random. Where are they to be put? They are not perfect enough to represent National Art, as Etty's do at Edinburgh, yet they show as much high *intellectual* power: the shortcoming is in execution. They are too austere and rough to please and satisfy, and so instead of being known by a nation — by the nations — as Etty's "Combat,"

"Judith," and "Benaiah" are, here they are in a dark corner, behind an old house in Chelsea, unnoticed, unknown. The gradual broadenings of Biography and History may yet fetch them out to take their place in the history of progress.

Glance at p. 83 of *Sartor Resartus*, passage about "Capabilities." How well it might be woven in with an Essay on David Scott; and, also, the thought of some one as to the "Waste in Nature's Workshop." Run a comparison between Millais and D. Scott. D. Scott immensely the greater man of the two—Millais one of the most successful men who ever lived. Ask the Why? and the Wherefore? Analyse, go into the country green, and think it out, and you will have a fine time of it.

To J. S. B.

18th September 1873.

I QUITE envy you your first reading of Ruskin. Ruskin is a revelation of a new world; and it only wants the remove of a century to show him in his colossal proportions, though now, as must be the case with all such men, he has at length roused the dogs and wolves on his trail. Beside this, I think his fibre was too delicate to sustain

> The thousand shocks that come and go,
> The agonies and energies,
> The overthrowings and the cries,
> And undulations to and fro—

which such intense perceptions of Nature, Truth, and

Beauty laid upon him, having more on hand than he could wield with perfect health and power.

I do not think his theories of life will work, yet I do esteem him one of the very noblest creatures that ever breathed God's vital air; a man not a whit behind the Sir Philip Sidneys and the *Chevaliers sans peur et sans reproche* who have cropped out like the flower which blooms once in a hundred years. I shan't soon forget the silent farms and solitary ways where I first drank in *The Modern Painters*, *The Stones of Venice*, and *The Seven Lamps*, and would give a good deal to have it all over again. I have not read anything of his for years.

. . . . . .

What is Art? The interpretation of Nature.

What is Nature? One of the voices of God to Man, and that a mighty voice.

But what is Interpretation? Now suppose a man stood up to interpret, and were to read over the exact words of the chapter and then sit down! Would you call *that* interpretation? Yet that is just what ninety-nine hundredths of painters do, or try to do. What do they explain or enforce? No wonder if pictures are so often thought and called "furniture."

. . . . . .

Now Danby gives us, as no other man ever gave, the poignant beauty and pathos of Nature in the borderland, where she is felt as

> A presence that disturbs us with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts ; *a sense sublime*
> *Of something far more deeply interfused,*
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky and *in the mind of man.*

"In the mind of Man," for Art is one of "The Humanities." It is *relative.* Nature is all things to all men. To the hungry food ; to the cold fuel ; to the speculator possession ; to the botanist a flora ; to the naturalist a fauna ; to the fool *Nothing.* And so Art is nothing.

Danby must have watched on lonely hills, in silent vales, the last spark of great Day die out and the first rise ten thousand times before he could find the secret of that pathetic dream of Nature which makes his works unique.

Top of Omnibus going to Westminster.

To address myself once more towards making the requisite distinctions, I must use comparisons. Here is a man with a beard and a cherry pipe, and a slouch hat, who sings in a mellow bass voice, "I am a Friar of Orders Grey," or the song of "Simon the Cellarer." He gathers his traps together, and his white umbrella, and he goes to Bettws-y-Coed, and he paints "The Old Mill at Bettws" for the 3456th time. He gets every stick and stone and stump "on the spot" ; and off *the spot* he is just *nothing.* As to "the inner eye which is the bliss of solitude," he says it is "*all* my

eye" (I deny that: it is not *his* eye. It may be Wordsworth's eye, but it is not Simon the Cellarer's). Yet his "Old Mill at Bettws" brings him 250 or 300 guineas, and actually the imitation and manipulation are made the standard for the man who *has* the inner eye.

Now how shall we compare the two *sorts* of production?

Take a sonnet of Shakespeare's, Collins's *Ode to Evening*, Gray's *Elegy*, Tennyson's *Come down, O Maid*, and consider what went to their production. Then read in the *Daily News* "Our Correspondent at Ramsgate," and consider what went to *its* production. That gives but a faint image of the two sorts of work. Billy Button's journey to Brentford, as compared with Sir John Franklin's Arctic Voyages, is not more apart than the true poetic from "The Old Mill at Bettws."

But unfortunately, in the pursuit of "the poetic," unless a painter can live independently of his art, he runs the risk of perishing on the mountains.

To W. D.

3rd October.

Reading *Timon of Athens*. I seldom read Shakespeare of late years. It is too rich food. I have to feed on biscuit and water in order to keep calm and cool. The felicitous Titian-touch which turns everything into idyllic beauty with such simple unconscious ease—as a stroke of Titian's brush gathers into golden

knots just at the right point tint and pigment, and thought and thing inextricably mixed and left, in the passing of the wizard hand: the motion of genius indeed, which can't get wrong and finds right most easy — this is Shakespeare, and it is *too* precious. After reading a play of Shakespeare one feels stuck all over with jewels like the Shah, and wants to put on the comfortable old happy gray coat.

To J. F. H.

THE well-governed city—

> Piety and fear,
> Religion to the gods, peace, justice, truth,
> Domestic awe, night-rest, and neighbourhood,
> Instruction, manners, mysteries, and trades,
> Degrees, observances, customs, and laws.
> TIMON OF ATHENS (*Act* iv. *Sc.* 1).

Was ever a picture of social *weal* drawn with such power in so few words? To feel its full force you have to halt at every word. How seldom you have to do that with any author! Somehow the richness underlying the simplicity of this passage suggests the state of one of those German towns of the fifteenth century, where all was quaint law and mediæval repose. Certainly it has a "Tory" air about it. These few lines have swarmed with life to me during the last week. Baron Leys's pictures give you the colours and shapes for it. The line beginning "Domestic awe" is wonderful. You see the furred

grandparents and the house-father like Sir Thomas More, and the son that "carfe before his father at the table," the "Mother Severe" with her face sharp-cut out of a shroud-like head-dress, and the demure, mitten-armed daughter, and the sharp-scolded servants. In "Night-Rest" you see the dim town and the belfry of Bruges in the misty moonlight; you hear its soft-clanging chime and the strange-rhymed, godly night-cry of the watchman with his bill and his lantern. And how comprehensive is the word "neighbourhood"! "Who is my neighbour?"

By the way, this illustration of what may be got out of *a bit* of a good book will carry forward the thought I was trying to express yesterday in this ventilator. Why move further: why?

> If we have souls, know how to see and use,
> One place performs, like any other place,
> The proper service every place on earth
> Was framed to furnish man with.

One of the causes of continual pity in all directions is the innate restlessness and ignorant discursiveness of men. They have no "blissful centre," no repose.

Talk with a policeman—one of our members: subject, Emigration. His way of pronouncing "situation" is "sitchivation."

How differently, as a human being, you feel according to your "sitchivation"! Walking alone in a quiet lane, walking from the train to your office, walking in

a procession (as perpetual Grand Monster of the Oddfellows, etc., with apron and blue ribbons a foot wide). But there is one sort of walking quite peculiar, viz. making your way in one stream of men and women on an illumination night. Where be your airs and graces then? Where your fast paces? You beat with the pulse of the street whose life blood creeps. No temper but good temper is of any use, and that *is*.

Now in studying Shakespeare your mind, if it is to apprehend his, must be content to move in *that* way to get a good look at the illuminations and to apprehend his knowledge of Nature and man—a snail's pace, occasional long arrests when you "grow to marble with too much conceiving," for he is too many for you.

To C. M.

4th October 1873.

All that the Press can utter about Sir Edwin Landseer will be as nothing to the mental history of such a man, for which he paid so dearly—

> And learned in sorrow what he taught in song.

I am sure all their interpretations will be wrong. No "master bowman" can ever hit the mark. Just see the glimpses at the raw material of his nature—a perception so keen and strong that it hit everything, like Robin Hood's arrow or the pathfinder's bullet—a sensitiveness so acute that the groaning of creation was audible to every nerve, a something infused with his sunshine-spirit which was like the Scottish "second

sight"—Ossianic, misty, ghostly, as though he constantly

> Saw a hand you cannot see,

and

> Heard a voice you cannot hear.

And this from twelve years of age, when he might be called already a great painter, to the age of seventy-one. The wonder was, not that he spent so much time in the forlorn vale of madness, as that he lived to be of the age of man and painted to the last.

Even in Sir Walter Scott's palmy days Landseer had a world-wide reputation, and is noted with reverence in those wondrous romances. I think there is a sort of impertinence in the *praise* of Landseer, if people did but know what his work implies.

I couple Landseer and Sir Walter Scott together. They had the same delicious romance of Nature, the same ease of power about them, the same universal power to charm. Strange that both had the same love of high life, coupled with sympathy for low life. The former was the weakness of both; it lost the grand central MAN in the gentleman.

THERE is such a thing as having the heart overcharged, not only with "surfeiting and drunkenness," but "with cares of this life." My faith has been severely weighted by the apparent rejection of my attempts to follow a high and useful line of work instead of trying after what was likely to make money, and the more so as one disillusionment after another

shows me that men praise thee chiefly when thou doest well to thyself, and take all manner of advantage of the helplessness of poverty. These things form the boisterous wind in which faith is in danger of sinking. But again and again when I have cried out "Lord, help me," a strong hand has been stretched out, and all has been calm and still. My most precious recollections are of these storms and succeeding calms, and when I am safe landed in the ship with Christ I can see deep and far.

I NEVER before saw, as I have since I tried to get into it more, the humbling influence of the *life* of Christ. A greater than Jonas—Jonas was a cantankerous, conceited, querulous, travelling preacher as ever quarrelled with the stationing committee, and yet was a far more successful preacher than his Lord—all our Lord's miracles could not satisfy: "Show us a sign from *heaven*." You're an earth-demon, a thaumaturge, a mere juggler. He only sighed deeply in His spirit, did not turn round and destroy them, as Elisha the children. Love and pity and patience and silence, as when a sheep before her shearers is dumb. If the image of all this does not break our stony hearts, the Cross itself will hardly break them. The life in Nazareth alone, with its "thundering silence," is enough when well meditated to cure all worldliness of aim. "He *grew*, in wisdom, in stature, in favour with God and man." People liked Him, and God loved Him.

The Christ life is no Nirvana, no dim and dull absorption into unconsciousness.

To J. F. H.

One effect of the autumnal years of life is the Indian summer of thought and study. You *see through* what used to excite and run away with you. Only, to have the soft, tranquil, golden light lying level over all, there must be the *right* world. Autumn is not a manufacture; it is a season, and depends on the "operation of the orbs," on a vast axis, on an enormous orbit, on the silent signs of heaven. It filters downward into every cranny impartially, gilding our lane, but it comes in its essence from afar, "bound by gold chains about the feet of God." So is life. When a man is past fifty, if he have been a real student, he must feel that he has had enough, more than he can ever use. He sees that things come round and meet again. The youth who has just passed his B.A. examination is far cleverer than he, and many a thing that he was smart about at twenty-five lies in the mud, like Stephenson's old steam-engine, rusting. A new generation is crowing all round him, not wise, but thinking itself so because it spells cock-a-doodle-doo with a K (kokadoodledoo); yet he is not disgusted nor cynical, for knowledge and wisdom excel folly, as light excelleth darkness, though man at his best estate is altogether vanity. If he *be* subject to vanity he is subjected in hope, and

has in his heart, if his *axis* be right, the "Hope of Glory."

14*th October* 1873.

To allay the Imagination by a square is a sort of bliss. It preserves the otherwise fugitive conception as in amber. Yet it consumes no time, and wastes no money, and piles no unfinished canvases against the wall. Indeed by simply *going on*, squaring has become so glorious that I can't help prating about it. Suppose a sportsman—a fisherman out among the reeds and rushes, and "many-knotted water flags" of some vast land of meres where the wild swan rises, and the wild ducks make letters on the sky—casts his line, and ere long his float dips suddenly and vigorously, and he "strikes," and finds a noble fish secure; that's not a hundredth part so delightful as roaming along the endless margins of books, and as you pass by a corner, down dips the float of imagination and out comes with a catgut whistle a splendid glistering "subject" which is immediately laid on the bank, the margin, the beached margent, in the form of a square, and left there till called for—not even the trouble of carrying it home being appended to the sport.

To W. D.

14*th October* 1873.

Such a happy, healthy fitness of various elements has matured in my life that there is no weariness (except the occasional shrinking in of vital force, which

only repose renews). What with painting, what with squaring, what with ventilation, what with outlets for art in class work, and Home life, and Friend life—all "co-operate to an end," each relieving the other, like the divine watchers. I don't know what to add on to life. . . .

Am reading *Julius Cæsar*. The various *respects* in which excellence is excellent form one of the charms of study. Every now and then one underscores three or four lines of Shakespeare; the *expression* is so overwhelming. But in other respects you could not underscore his excellence. It is as the broad spaces, the main lines of a picture. It is not the exquisite imitation, as in Landseer, of miraculous fur and feather: it is the mystic Whole. Nay, in some of the greatest art there is a rather poor perception of the pungent individual Part. I take Francis Danby as a case in point. His very name is precious to me, and represents the highest posture of the *specific* poetic feeling in landscape. Men might paint "Calypso" better, but none could paint it so well. Large parts of the very grandest pictures are mere "flatting" at 5d. a yard, and not well done either, for there are lumps and knots in it, a shame to be seen. It is in seeing these distinctions that the groundlings are discomfited. It is so in religion. Men don't see the Methodist Soul burning in the rude gnarled bush that is not consumed, nor the Church of England Soul in the blossomed glory of the fragrant bush, which perhaps it, after all, was, but which would have gone

without memorial but for the God that spake out of its midst.

3.30 P.M.

ALONE in R. B.'s room, looking at *Life of Faraday*, æt. 21. Exquisitely quaint, childlike, simple, yet with the innate *lungeousness* that betokens the leviathan he afterwards became. This I take to be the token of *genius*, as distinguished from the steady priggish up-growths of *talent*.

Friday, 11.30.

ANOTHER priceless morning. Been round Canonbury; now in the lane. One ought to be out all day such days as this. *Stothardizing* slowly, slowly with sketch book.

I found a wonderful image in *Coriolanus*, both in conception and utterance, and have begun it on a twelve-inch panel.

> Like to a lonely dragon whom his fen
> Makes feared and talked of more than seen.

Certainly these twelve-inch idylls are the *flos florum* of my life. Why do people want them larger? To my mind it is a shame to want them more complete or exact. Fine art of a certain kind is most generally killed by completion. These twelve-inch things do all for you that can be done. They quicken and suggest. When you first saw them you said "How appetising!" That was just it. The right word for other sorts is, "How gorging" (not gorgeous).

> Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
> Her infinite variety

Now what that "Serpent of old Nile" was to Antony (only without her wickedness), that, I think, such art as I affect ought to be to the dinted and dusted Antonys of commerce and law and what not.

This full-flowing river of ideas is, in reality, not an excited state of the mind in the present; it is the legitimate outcome of thirty years of orderly and organic study. The picture I paint to-day was often, in fact, conceived twenty years ago, and has been in a state of fusion with thousands more ever since. But the price was paid fully down for it. If it were historic or Scriptural, it came after the hundredth meditation upon it—turned over in all sorts of moods, and then, perhaps, suddenly taking form at once. This makes part of the delight of my work. It is a quiet reaping of what was so long since sown, and which I have watched in all weathers with "long patience."

22nd October 1873.

They have opened two new astounding rooms at South Kensington; in one of which is a cast from the pillar of Trajan itself, only it is in two parts. Round the column runs a spiral bas-relief. I know not what the subject is, yet every figure is no doubt a study, with eyes, nose, mouth, action, horses and men. Did any man ever see it all? Who designed it? Here in London is the very substance of his thinkings for years. However, let that rest. My

thought in starting was this. Though you only look at a figure or two of all these winding crowds, yet it is needful that all should be *finished*; and the assurance that beside the two or three figures you looked at are hundreds more as good, which you *might* look at; this reflection fills you and elevates you. You have seen a grand monument. Seen it? What do you mean, Sir? What is the two hundredth figure from this end of the procession like? Or the tenth from that? what is the last figure of all doing? Has it any significance?

When did the sculptor lay down his chisel and say "Done"? Did he collapse like Gibbon?

I ask a few questions, and am not going to reply to them, nor even to knit the reasoning beneath them.

But be sure of this, that though no single man on earth will ever behold a 10,000th part of what you have done, and though the sculptor himself who did those figures could not after ten years tell you which was which, yet if your work is faithful in the least it will have its final and grand *wholeness*.

These figures were done by him; and though we know not his name nor place, he is *here*, winding round the pillar of Trajan. What is any one worth except for what he says or does? What's in a *name*?

> The actions of the just
> Smell sweet and blossom in the dust—

and every day since A.D. 112 thousands of minds

have been touched, moved around that spiral column of thought—

1873
112

1761 years.
365

8805
10566
5283

642765 days.

Now for the spectators, the rabble with their exclamations, the soldiers who fought in Trajan's wars, the musing philosophers, the poet.

The pulsations of reflex thought thus created in each mind?

The silent towering of the pillar, at dawn, at twilight, under the moon.

The things it saw at its base (which was not the base of Pompey's statue, or it might have seen the fall of Cæsar, only it was born too late). The dignity and order of some regions, the fury of others, the Gothic shouts later on, the line of popes, all of whom knew the pillar well. And how would a pope look at a pillar of Trajan?

The far view, the near view, both enhanced in solemnity by the consciousness of its workmanship.

Charlemagne, the "man of iron," stood and looked at it, and it said nothing; but the procession went winding up to the skies, as his armies wound up the passes of the Alps in 800 A.D., near 700 years after that man in my square was gone, the time of the duration of a majestic nation.

Charlemagne and his Paladins knew of Trajan's pillar as being a wonder and a sign; a part of the stateliness of Rome the proud.

The lesson of these spasmodic dartings of the imagination o'er "the dark backward and abysm of Time."

This: "He that is faithful in a few things is faithful also in much." That's *one*, and the uppermost to-night.

"The *work* is the man." That's another. That you should be *reckoned* the means of doing this or the other good—what could that do for you? But to *be* the means—what can that fail to do for you? It will be found to praise, and glory, and honour at the glorious appearing, when the true solution of these mystic problems of name and fame will be given, and when some will wake to discover the meaning of shame and everlasting contempt, and some will shine as the stars for ever and ever.

It is deeds that will do that. Then shall every man have praise of his own work.

Cheer up, then, O Soul! We count them happy that endure.

To J. F. H.

22*nd October* 1873.

Been walking and ventilating in the lane. Feel fresh and happy. Thought of the leaders' meeting last night. There was the superintendent. There was a gardener, a baker, a cheesemonger, a postman, and myself. We sat till near 10 P.M. Now what were the topics? When is the juvenile missionary meeting to be? When the society tea-meeting? How best to distribute the poor money? etc. Here were six people delightfully sitting in a quiet room to forward these ends. What is *proposed* by each of those ends? "Peace on earth, goodwill to men." The very heart and substance of the angels' song, and not a particle of anything else. No wonder that being so privileged as to get into such healthy air I have so often come home cured to the core—come home, as last night, so fresh, so calm, so delivered from all my fears and troubles. True, the gardener cares less than nothing for what forms the staple of my life's work; so much the better—better—BETTER! as the White Queen says in *Alice through the Looking-Glass*—nor the postman, nor the baker. Why, the point of the thing is to *forget*—to merge. To find a common denominator, all sweet and calm, like sun and air, in which man agrees with man, and all men with God. And this once found bliss runs through all. The art that would otherwise over-heat and dissatisfy, and make querulous and dilettanteish and ex-human, becomes as a soul

absorbed into the soul of all. No longer its slave, it finds that art becomes a slave itself with its wonderful lamp. Perhaps the magical stories of Solomon meant something of this sort. Whether or not, here is the true secret, the "Open Sesame," and till a man has found it, be he John Stuart Mill, or Lord Byron, or Goethe, "the glorious devil large in heart and brain who did love beauty only," all other secrets are null, and no good spirit will ever open to their spell. What does open let

> The shadow waiting with the keys

tell.

> The river is green and runneth slow;
> We cannot tell what it saith,
> It keepeth its secrets down below,
> And so does death.

I was appalled with a grand answer given at the "Sombre close of her voluptuous day," to Cleopatra by Enobarbus. Isaiah asks, "What will ye do in the *end thereof*?" So, when the star of Antony has fallen, and Cæsar marches against the gates, she says, "What shall we *do*, Enobarbus?" I really don't know from what abyss of thought and expression Shakespeare fetched the answer of Enobarbus—

"THINK AND DIE!"

OUR LANE, 1*st November*.

WIND chill as a snow wind, yet fresh; light glary roads, damp and with a spotted *plage* of decaying leaves in the mud; the pebbles washed clean on the watershed of the roads, the sand washed from them

lying in the valleys by the kerbstone and "ribbed as is the lean sea-sand."

To J. F. H.

19*th November* 1873.

Mr. and Mrs. Cowper-Temple came to-day and stayed from 2.30 till dusk. He bought the small "Hymn" for 120 guineas. I never enjoyed showing my work, more than to them. They were so apt and so alive to the nicest shades of things. I gave them my usual sermon on monumentalism, and their response to all was of the liveliest perceptiveness. What hours have I spent (like John Willett in *Barnaby Rudge* when he tried to hammer "imagination" into his son Joe) in trying to expound my views on that subject! But these two awakened souls caught every spark as fast as it fell.

Rossetti has sent me a letter from G. F. Watts to him in which he says:—

> Being in the country it was not possible for me to go to see the pictures at Stoke Newington, which I certainly should have done had I been in town, for I recollect the former pictures proving very remarkable artistic faculties.

Life does not consist in externals, and I do hope that if more sunny days are in store I may not lose one spark of that blessed inward rest which has been the support of my days of struggle and labour.

To C. M.

1874.

The great importance of the historic study of the Psalms is that it individualises them to the mind.

Once get Ps. 142 with its array of words driven into the Cave of Adullam, and sealed with its number over the mouth of the cave, and those words will never run in among the Temple songs.

One of the greatest hindrances to spiritual profit is confusion of memory.

Read, therefore, some Psalms by the red light of Ziklag; others in the piercing solitudes of Engedi; others in the blaze of the Temple sacrifice; and the 119th on a Sunday evening, "when quiet in your house you sit."

Nay, if possible, stretch out the eras of time between Psalm and Psalm. Go to Midian in 1490 B.C. for the solemn, vast, desert sounds of Ps. 90. Join in the 150th with the joyful procession round "Jerusalem Delivered" in 445.

1490
445
———
1045

A thousand years in Thy sight!

Think of a Saxon Psalm written in the year 874, say by Alfred the Great, and a Psalm written by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1874! Yet this only represents the state of things between Ps. 90 and Ps. 150, and the mental posture ought to be accordingly.

20th March 1874.

As an instance of the sort of vexatious delays in

the progress of a picture is this—I want a dead lamb for my "First Passover," and I must have a model. I want it soon. I send to our butcher. He "does not kill lamb yet; it is too expensive; in a week or two he may, and will let me know." This morning his man says he can't, when they kill, bring the lamb here, for "unless the skin is taken off while it is warm they can't take it off." So I shall have to go to it, and be quick about it. At every turn, and about the least things, this is the way. Madox Brown's models for "Cromwell" make quite a nice tale: the horse, the lamb, the pigs, the ducks. The pigs cost him 50s. in donations and travelling expenses. The duck had to have its bill held open by the servant, and then was killed for its wing. The little pigs squealed the whole time, and bit the man who held them till the blood came. The bother about sunlight complicated the complications. Anything more delightful than painting *in itself* cannot be found—even these delays as to models, etc., would be interesting if time and money did not matter. At best it is slow, very slow.

To J. S. B.

21*st March* 1874.

BLAKE is certainly a teaser. He remains in England, where alone he is known, the very best test I know of a man's capacity for seeing the highest essentials of art, the perception of sublimity and beauty when utterly denuded and divorced from externals, "defecate of sense," nay, full of infirmity,

his "bodily presence weak and his speech contemptible." If a man can see and feel that which makes Blake what he is, he can see and feel anything.

"In the Spirit he speaks mysteries." But one must not say this of *any* of his works, which were very numerous and uninviting in method, material, and style; now and then positively ugly and awkward, or tame and flat, often childish, dreadfully mannered, monotonous beyond most men in style. He lived to be an old man, was very diligent, always producing, going right ahead through all sorts of highways and byways, bogs and dens and caves, and finding it hard to get 30s. for a drawing, living the external life of a journeyman watchmaker, fully happy in his vocation as a designer and utterly indifferent to worldly ends and aims. One needs to take his life and works as a whole. The man is not separable from his works. A Titian speaks for itself or a Correggio, but a Blake does not. The right understanding of him becomes a kind of second sight. He was "intromitted into the spirit world," as Swedenborg said he was, which means simply that he had the ghostly sensibility, the apprehension of what is supernatural, not only in the representation of angels, spirits, demons, but of the spirit that is in man on the earth. His men and women have ghosts inside them, and that's what can be said of not so many. Their impulses, gestures, relations, are not earthly; they are like "the gods, whose dwelling is not with the flesh." They are above carnal household motions and habitudes. A

sheet and a turnip-lantern would not alarm before it is found out unless there were *some* signs of the ghost about it, and Blake often collapses under the daylight gaze, like this apparatus of the sheet; but anybody could tell a ghost from a turnip in the daytime: you want darkness and its appropriate surroundings. Blake should not be sought "by day, when every goose is cackling."

These are some of the considerations which wrap him round and make him so profound a test. The groundling, hearing that it is a great name, will fly into raptures over every bald, gray, Indian-ink group he sees, and the inapt and imperceptive will show him the door. It is just in the power of steering through his works, and rightly discriminating, that the art-illuminated soul is discoverable.

4th May 1874.

THE conditioning of English art has come to be dramatic and striking. The silent brotherhood disperse over Europe and further: to Damascus, Cairo, Algiers. They go, each apart, to solitary places, and to places desolate of old; to little Italian towns, quaint German villages, Scotch glens, bare twilight vales in the Hebrides, and a long hush falls upon them. May comes round, and all is changed. It is as when we stood in the barge at the Boat-race, only instead of the fleeting dream of dark and light blue we have a nation lining the banks, restless and glittering, and waiting for the galley of Cleopatra as on the Cydnus of old. Artillery are in waiting at intervals,

and all is expectation. At last comes the golden galley of art high out of the water, with regular pulses of silver oars moving to "flutes and soft recorders." She reclines in pomp under the silken sail swollen to fulness. There is a deck above her on which stand in glittering armour, with sash and plume, the great painters and sculptors of the year, and behind them, but raised on another deck, crowd princes, statesmen, warriors fresh from the field, "with station like the herald Mercury new-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill." Right beneath you, as it seems, and close over you, suddenly burst and boom the guns of fame, and shake the air and the earth and you.

You, what are *you* doing, at your age, in the empty barge moored at the brink? Why are you not on the galley? Are you not filled with envy? Will you not throw some mud as it passes? No, indeed; I've brought three laurel wreaths to throw aboard—one for Millais, one for Watts, one for somebody else, I won't say who—settle it among yourselves, only don't let Hart get hold of it. The only mischief I am inclined for is to put hollow hand to mouth, like Rossetti's "Hector," and yell out, "Where's old Brown? What have you done with Gabriel Rossetti? Yah!"

I've nothing to say against the galley, and cheer with the loudest, and shall delight myself with every touch of these men, and those also who are not there.

Still, you know the working of the old problems, and each time the galley sails up the Cydnus I am

obliged to ask my heart the old set of questions, and my heart replies with no hesitation as of yore, "I would not have it otherwise. If all were to do over again, I would do just the same."

Only I say this with more rest and gladness than ever, with more entire contentment, with deeper thankfulness to God and to man.

To D. G. R.

7th May 1874.

WENT to-day to the R.A. Exhibition, and afterwards to Christie's to see the Landseer sketches which are to be sold to-morrow. In looking at one of them, there was a piece as big as a shilling knocked off, showing the white ground—a little finger with a ring on it fell rapidly into the abrasion. Thought I, "That's an artist's hand and trick; nobody but an oil-painter would do that." I looked up, and it was Millais. He was shortly afterwards saluted by some one. "I hope you're well." "Oh yes; I'm always well, thanks." I wish *you* could say that, or Shields. Yet, "who knows what is good for man upon the earth?"

Millais's "North-west Passage" is a very fine, manly, strong thing every way. His "Still for a Moment" is as good as one of the old masters or Reynolds. His landscapes I was sorry to be disappointed with in comparison with his "Chill October." They are powerful, but too coarse and raw and unfeeling.

I am glad you are taking it easy. I hope you

pound your talk very small, and lie on your back looking up into vacancy. Vacancy is one of our best friends at times.

In looking at some of the coarse, bold, effective canvases at the Academy there comes the temptation to do six pictures for one, to get into a *bold* mood. "Boldness" always takes in a crowd, and but for a whole fortress of squares, where in years past every such question has been arraigned, I should in some moods be in danger of betrayal. But I am sure that for lasting usefulness and acceptance it will be found that the quiet, well-thought-out way is best. It is in art as in life. Your bold, loud, fluent man carries all before him in a big meeting, but it's the man alive to difficulties, and conscious of the vast area of things and the feebleness of his own nature, and who looks on life as a whole—it is he who survives and grows and conquers at length.

The following is illustrated by a group of ferns with curled-up fronds, as seen from the breakfast-room window. One of these fronds is taller than the rest, over-topping them, as it were :—

Friday, 9.35 A.M. (Lower Room).

WE have been wondering at and admiring this group of ferns at a certain stage of growth. It is like a highly respectable family: mother and six daughters—one of Anthony Trollope's Barchester families living in the Cathedral Close. Look at the resemblance to a bishop's crozier, and call them the Miss Croziers or the Misses Crozier and their lofty

mamma. They are of a splendid brown-gold colour. Higher on the bank is another family, distantly related to the Croziers, and standing about to be noticed—a pale green washed-out family—the Hart's-tongues, of no position; the best of them have to get good situations as governesses, which the Croziers help them to —not so much that the cathedral has taught them charity unfeigned, but for their own credit's sake. Note the green trimmings of Mrs. Crozier. There is in a nook of the hills yet another and a smaller branch of the same family. These are scarcely green at all; they are gray, with faint assumptions of green, knowing that there is a bishop in the family. I don't know their names; the Croziers call them "those people."

To J. F. H.

10*th June* 1874.

To be too much liked is one of the great evils of life. If one friend speaks well of you to another, and he to a third, you are, by this progression, in a *mess* in no time, especially if you are of the "amiable" sort. "Come and play with me," says the butterfly to the busy bee. Observe the butterfly never says, "Busy bee, I like you, and will come and watch you work." Then if you don't go and play, the butterfly goes winging among the dragonflies, and says you are not half so pretty as she thought; that your black and yellow bands are in bad taste; and that you are only a hum-drum sort of honey-bagger, always after your hive. When prejudice sets in, then it is well

with the honey-bee; and if the bee every now and then sting savagely, so much the better. The fact will be that you are just in reality *what you are*, and that what the butterfly and dragonfly say won't alter the fact. Perhaps you *are* conceited, proud, self-sufficient, vain. If you're *not*, the butterfly and dragonfly can't make it be so. If you *are*, the sooner it is commonly understood the better.

One *naturally* thinks, "the more friends the better." "The wider spread is your good name the better." This delusion will last till fifty. Then a little touch of wisdom breaks in, and you see from the other end of the telescope.

To be told at twenty or thirty "Such a person can't bear you" has an uncomfortable effect. At fifty there is something of a dulcet sound in it in comparison.

To J. S. B.

30*th June* 1874.

As in talking with some men your eye glances restlessly from top to toe, your ear quickly curious at every tone and inflection, your observation alive to every gesture, posture, quality, you form your conclusion of the man's whereabouts; so with books and claims in general. You watch this man and say, "He's a bit of a fool, but has no touch of the rascal." You look at the other and say, "Clever fellow, but I would not trust him further than I could see him." Yet if in either case you are asked Why? you can't exactly tell. It's a number of very little things put together. You leave

a margin and say, "I may after all be mistaken," but you don't think you are, and you act accordingly.

Is not our conviction as to the credibility of the Gospels and Epistles *practically* based on this subtle moral instinct? "This *must* be true. It is impossible that either fool or rascal could have invented the 14th of John or the 12th of Romans. They are honest to the bone."

Some one read to me out of a book of Dean Stanley's what, if I remember rightly, was cited as a specimen of the best of the pretended gospels, and one thought, "If that is the *best* one can't answer reasonably, but only print the word Bosh in letters twenty feet high."

Anyhow, if I'm not to make *short work* of my convictions it's a poor case; and my case is better than that of millions. Directly after breakfast and walk comes *work*: only an hour a day at most when thought can withdraw itself to verify these great matters. Am I to go *plowthering* and sniffling for years in the immeasurable mass of "Evidences"? Then God help me and help $\frac{19}{20}$ of the race!

But my full heart, it replies with the distinctness of a golden bell, "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God. Thou art the King of Israel."

To C. M.

8th September 1874.

Have been "snatching a fearful joy" over the Duke of Argyle's *Iona* this morning. His way of

fixing you in the period is fine and poetic. In such processes the mind "forgets itself to marble," "the monumental caves of death look cold," "the cities desolate of old" swarm, time plays at fast and loose with you, "the fallings from us—vanishings" are numerous as the "atom-streams running along the illimitable inane." You glance wildly at Emperors and Popes, as if you ought to know them, you do in a sense: "I think I've seen you before." Gregory the Great frowns in passing. "Knowest thou not me *yet*?" as Coriolanus said. Theodore stalks to his grave in Ravenna and lies down in silence. Patient monks write and illuminate through long centuries. Grim hermits are going by mountain passes to their clefts in the rock. The sea bristles with Scandinavian fleets, Benedict sets up his long monastic line on Monte Casino; and Columba knows nothing about it, but labours, no one knows how, among the Picts. The world of the Past quakes and moves as in Ezekiel's vision. Tell you about it? Nay, I can't do *that*. I'm no teller of dead men's tales. I simply live, looking on and watching the phantoms pass. They glower and pass on, as the lion that met Cæsar in the street of Rome did, and "went surly by." Let other men draw conclusions, and evolve principles, and coolly tell you what the Middle Ages were.

Tell me what a back street in a Pictish town was, and how the people knew that Columba was going to preach a Charity Sermon, and how he and his congre-

gation looked when they met each other with ancient eyes.

These visions are greatly helpful while living the daily life. Who can be vexed with the gossip in the next street, "the cackle of the bourg," or much discontented with his daily life, if he have food and raiment; or be greatly concerned how he stands with the penny papers if he be in sight of the solemn Past —the deeply silent Past?

But this very silence, and dim multitude and confusion, teach the one lesson,

Thou, in this Thy Day.

What hope elsewhere? Fame? What worth? Riches? What profit? But the Duty of to-day, the nearest thing, the nearest person, the holy impulse of the hour —that is life and joy and peace.

To T. A.

13th September.

Have read through the Duke of Argyle's *Iona*: a very delightful little book. There is something unutterably pathetic in the relations of time. Columba makes Iona. You stand where Dr. Johnson stood, his "piety growing warmer," and look for monuments of Columba. You see old walls rent by the sea-blasts, and stare into antiquity. But see now, that ruined Chapel is the oldest thing there. Who built it? Queen Margaret of Scotland built it in fervent memory of the good Columba. But fancy her peering back to

the days of Columba, as far as we have to do, to reach Chaucer or Edward the Third. "So long ago lived my Columba," says she, as she paces the moonlit shores. "Who can flit across those five centuries?" says she. How were they filled up in that "dark backward and abysm of time"? A little she knows of history among the northern seas, but it is weird conjecture mainly, it is the "long ago" and little more. "And Christ lived twice as far back in the world's events." But many, many moonlights since have shone on the Sound of Iona and all its "finny drove." *We* look much further back on Queen Margaret than she on Columba; for she died in the year 1093.

And what imagination can deal with the 200 years of quiet monastic life in Iona after the death of Columba?—200 years! When only a single sail came to bring an Irish saint, or a little fleet bearing some Scandinavian king to be buried in the Holy Isle! The Monks—who were *they*? Where did they come from? What was the history of only *one* of them from boyhood till his old age, when he went on penning the Gospel text, or writing a slow chronicle, or keeping the farm accounts? But if these calm 200 years baffle us so, what of the succeeding 300 years when the heathen came out of their cold hard hills and brought fire, famine, and slaughter to every British coast, and spared no holy hairs, and no shrine of peace?

Have you and I to face the world of the past as well as the world that now is, and see the dead, small and great, stand before God?

One of the most dreadful Old Testament pictures is that of Joram on the wall of Samaria, 2 Kings vi. 25-33, in sackcloth.

Some think these entertaining old books are given to be exercises in ingenious research and criticism, and others *scorn* them as impudently as Jehoiakim. When they have read three or four leaves they cut it with a penknife and cast it into the fire till the whole roll is consumed, and think no more of it till they are carried to Riblah and bound before Nebuchadnezzar. What! Is not a high fever, a hollow consumption, a falling beam, a thousand occurrent evils, as sure and awful as "the worst of the heathen," even though a smooth English doctor moves across the scene, and his varnished brougham waits in the street? He that is wise and will observe these things sees them to-day. Is it conceivable that the God who made the Seven Stars and Orion, and who is without variableness or shadow of turning, played off caprices on the narrow seaboard of Asia Minor in the centuries before our era, which, having come to another mind, or being weary, He has ceased to enact in modern days, cowed and overfaced by steam and penny newspapers reeled off without stopping? Is the Strength of Israel lying or repenting now the world has waxed older and wiser and more scientific, and is clothed in cloth, and builds magnificent club-rooms in Pall Mall, where His name goes for nothing?

To T. A.

To say that "all men are vain" (Thackeray) is a slight accusation, a matter of course. One is vain of his wealth, another of his good looks, another of his accomplishments, another of his piety. The grace of God does wonders all round. "Half beast, half devil," was John Fletcher's view of human nature. The beast and the devil disappear—are cast out—the dumb devil, the unclean devil, the cruel devil, the avaricious devil. The vain devil is such an insignificant Skip Jack that he is often left in a corner, and combs his hair at sixty at the bottom of the pulpit stairs.

At first we know too little to teach, all is mist and confusion. Then we know too much, all is intensity and disproportion. It is only when knowledge has settled down and "grown incorporate into Thee" that we teach at once with authority and with simplicity. Our knowledges are then dislinked from our display of them. They may be fresh to the hearer, they come natural to the speaker. He thinks more of the kernel than of the long-since-cracked shell and husk. He is not afraid of being tripped up by a tacit question, or a slippery blunder. "Clearly he sees and wins his way."

A FALLEN king may become a beggar. That's allowable. But he must not become a greengrocer or an oilman. Aut Cæsar aut Oilman is not good

Latin. There are no stages between Cæsar and Nullus.

Sunday, 10 A.M.

O DAY most calm, most bright!

Landseer's Hunted Stag in "The Sanctuary," where "nor hound nor huntsman shall his lair molest," among the peaceful echoing evening hills and the lonely rush of the disturbed wild ducks from the water flags into the amber air. This is not seldom the feeling with which I escape from the howling pack of week-day cares.

To C. M.

JOHN CROME. Born in Norwich, 1769–1821.
Apprenticed to coach builder.
Became Drawing Master.
Painted in leisure.

When I was a boy he was known among small dealers as "Old Crome." He was only 52 when he died. The name brought up the image of a venerable old fogey painting up to extreme old age. During the last ten years his pictures have been brought to the front, and he is called "John Crome." Some of his works are in the National Collection, and at sales his pictures fetch large prices.

Had an hour of delightful dwelling on his unknown career last evening. The works are the man, and if the man be able to put soul into them, whether he paint in a little house in Norwich or in a London studio matters little—nor how his picture is first sold.

It may be bought after much talk by some little householder for £5. That is a vast sum. It hangs for years on years in the glimmer of the little back parlour, and no man knows much about it. Whether John Crome were married or single I know not: but probably he was married and his family large. Being a coach painter at first and a good deep painter afterwards, he could not be much beside. But what matter? Where would his scraps of Latin and Greek have been now? While he lived he might have made better way with a transitory forgotten squire if he could quote Horace, but he and the squire are a prey to dumb forgetfulness—except—except what found its way to the point of his brush: his serious, sunny, all simple, all rich and happy views of the grandeur of the nooks of nature; the solemn, quiet corners where gray palings become impressive because of their weather marks and boundary marking and other subtle associations with nature and humanity.

You meet him in your morning or evening walk, a little dingy, not at all gentlemanly, not like "quoloty" who pass him on horseback to their tombs among the forgotten. He has his leather-backed sketch-book out, and is taking a memorandum of some little black pool under oak roots, his bosom quietly glowing with the sense of grandeur and unutterable solemnity. He pockets his book and walks on; the black pool and its weird growths rendered through the crucible of feeling and thought, and not wholly "like nature" (nature involved with man,

which is art and poetry)—this picture now moves all kindred souls in now one exhibition, now another. Docks and weeds and peaty waters were nothing to talk about, but moving as the haunts of Keats's Pan when shaped by the coach painter's stubby brush, too manly to condescend to thin lines and photographic dottings. So whether he were communicative or close, shy or genial, good tempered or bad, a man with many friends raining "Good mornings" all round, or a sort of water hen scarce known except to his quaint kind—a few of the same sort—what has that to do with it now? Mark it with your brush, seal it in a monument. Arthur himself "passes." So with contemporary opinion. What thought the wealthy Norwich lawyer, with his frill and his weight, at Norwich dinner parties in 1800? "Mr. Quiddity, I should like to know what you think of the oil pictures of my daughter's drawing-master." "What, Jack Crome? I knew him when he went 'prentice to old Axletree, and a lazy young dog he was. His oil paintings, ma'am? I'm no great judge, they look rather rough and fuzzy to me. Ought to go to Italy and see some of the Claudes I saw there in the year 1770."

"Where be his quiddities now, his quillets, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks," and his opinion of Jack Crome?

"Crōme—Crōme—Crōme!" blows the solemn wind of Fame, eerier than ever—and the black pool with its crooked roots and strange overgrowth and

"pipey hemlock" looks, all silent and revealing nothing, into the face of new generations.

I AM glad to have been gradually forced down from Roses of Dawn to the Foxglove and Rabbit dingles and dells, to Aylmer's field. If it succeed we will be in no hurry to get to the heights again, for the study of nature among the wild briar and the vine and the twisted eglantine is so soothing and sweet, and will be so useful for background purposes, that it never can be time lost.

One of the sweet Stothard habits was to stand among the honeysuckle hedgerows, drawing in sketch-books with various coloured inks the tendrils, leaves, blossoms, etc. Wax crayons were not invented in those days. But if Stothard could see my brown paper books he would say, "Sir, you have by experiment attained to the whole series of requirements necessary for the sufficient notation of those facts of nature which are needed when you come to paint small subjects in the studio."

To J. S. B.

6th January 1875.

GOT your kind letter this morning. I am glad to hear good news of you all, and to know where you are, and what you are about. Davies will be glad to hear that you are among his friends, and enjoying the antiquities and art of Rome. I should say cultivate Hemans. He is a mine of learning, and a

simple, quaint, unworldly man, with no back-thought of self-interest or littleness.

To say I envy you the rich associations of Rome would be true, and yet *not* true. I shrink from Italy, though so much thought has been given to it in the course of my life. It is too rosy, and odorous, and relaxing, as it proved to the Goths and Huns. I love the northern grayness, and hardihood, and repression, and hindrance, and vexing discipline, and sublimity.

> Bright, and fierce, and fickle is the South,
> And dark, and true, and tender is the North.

Also, without being a rabid anti-popery man, I am obliged by all that I live by, and live for, to tremble at the dismal cloud that rests on Italy and Spain, and is only shattered in France by rebellious lightnings which are not the still, small voice of God. At a distance I can be calm, but the more piercing and beautiful the "Miserere" above in the darkness, and the more enchanting the silver trumpets, the worse I feel. I think this has operated on me all my life, and though I formed no resolution or vow not to "see before I die the palms and temples of the South," it has kept me from the brisk desires and proposals which carry young men to Rome, dearly as my *mind* clings to the refined and easy-going life which I hear of there.

29*th March* 1875.

"LIGHT and Shade" is the atmosphere of painting, and varies as the sky and weather vary. Certain phases of it are fixed, and amenable to science and calculation; others are real and beautiful, but *not* amenable to science, *e.g.* in a landscape we never see shadows falling opposite ways; nor one shadow lengthy, as at evening, and another gathered up, as at noon. Also the slope of things fixes the form of their shadows, and the direction of the light the direction of their shadows. In Seddon's "Jerusalem" at South Kensington we see a piece of literal and exquisite representation, of harmonised lighting, which is quite correct—perfect indeed, yet which looks as flat as a photograph, though it has much feeling wrapped up in the treatment of details. They are not harshly, nor coldly, but delicately painted. In Collins's "Seaford," in the Sheepshanks Gallery, we have in the foreground a simple lighting of figures and sandbank, as the way of the light dictates. In the middle distance we have a fine effect of a transitory kind produced by shadows of clouds on flat sands; and the combinations of fixed shadows and accidental ones, woven together by composition with the cloud forms, constitute the light and shade of the picture. But though in Collins there is a scheme of light and shade in relation to the picture as a whole, instead of the flat accuracy of Seddon, Collins's cloud shadows are as true as his sandbank shadows. There should be, in order to good effect, the unity of both

these requirements, the shadows that must be with the shadows that may be, and these united by the unsearchable faculty of "Composition." But however bold, or deep, or striking effect may be, there must, in order to grand work, be no lying; nothing impossible. And even the admission of the improbable becomes a ticklish question, and may make a work "outré" or "queer," and so ruin it.

In these combinations of the *must* and the *may*, and their varying degrees of success, we have an enchanting region of unexhaustive delight, always remembering that there lies behind them the universe of God's handiwork.

To T. A.

27th April 1875.

People hesitate to purchase by the usual faint-heartedness which seeks *too much* evidence before it strikes, *e.g.* they would like to feel sure that they are buying a Turner, an "Old Crome," a David Cox, a Collins, a Constable, forgetting that this element of universal "Name" has taken time to ripen to its present value. The Turner-, Linnell-, Cox-, Constable-, Collins-work, now at a premium, was all in full flower when I was born. "Old Crome" had done all his work and died, and when I was twenty years old, no one would give more than £10 or £20 for an Old Crome (which was sold on Saturday for £1575). Turner then sold for £100 what yesterday fetched £7350. As to Constable and Linnell, at fifty years of age their houses were full of unsold

work; no man cared for it. The unshrewd and unreflective buyer of to-day is deluded for want of biography. He forgets the element of Time, does not draw distinctions between cases, thinks "Name" to be another entity from that which it is, secretly wants the low price, and the universal certainty of name; not seeing that the two things cannot go together.

Instead of buying an unsinged and unclipped long-legged filly from a remote Yorkshire pasture by the keen eye for hock and shoulder-blade, which sees an "Eclipse" or a "Gladiator" through its foolish foalhood, he wants to be assured (1) That this present filly won the blue ribbon of the turf; and then (2) To make a 'cute bargain for the filly with the Yorkshire farmer. Can't be done.

To J. S. B.

13*th May* 1875.

At Kew Bridge Station. Sketched this man [a profile] in pocket-book. The real points of differentiation between man and man (for the historical painter's purpose) are comprised in just that much of his frame. The facial angle, the brow, nose, nostril, eye, lip, chin. Why sketch his ear, or his hat, or anything else about him? Ears are the same, hats are the same. If he have a set of the shoulders very individual, then sketch that; not otherwise. See *little enough*. This seems a simple discovery, but it has taken a ton weight off my mind since I saw this and the like truths.

4th June.

LIKE other truths that lie inward after long practice, this note on re-reading needs an explanation. Of course everything, ears, hats, etc., have to be got from nature, but for historic purposes you may anywhere get a model for an ear or a hat; whereas the peculiar facial angle must be sketched there and then, or not at all. For you see it unexpectedly, and only for a short time, as a rule; and sometimes it is a magistrate or J.P. who wouldn't accept your eighteenpence an hour; and if you can't "bag" his nose, eyes, eyebrows, lips, and chin in a moderately short time in your pocket-book, you can't get him at all, for the finest chances are momentary. Now, when you have reduced that which it is incumbent to sketch to a minimum, leaving out ear, hat, etc., your chances are improved manifold, and you can seize him and bear him off with a chuckle: "I've got *you*, old gentleman, anyhow, you'll do capitally for the villain of the piece." Hogarth used to do this on his broad thumb-nail. One sees very well that Hogarth's faces must have been caught unawares. No one ever consciously sat for those marvellous expressions.

But as to painting, fresh crops keep springing out of the fallow-field after seasons of stoppage, such as the recent one. The most noticeable product of the past period of reflection and search is an increased resolve as to painstaking.

I don't mean mere hard work, for that is often, in art, waste of time; but hard *study* and forethought;

a whole brown-paper book full of sketches, where one or two sketches are often thought sufficient. Light on this subject increases greatly. The real work of the picture should be done off the canvas. And to make yourself see this and do it, is breaking the iron sinew in your neck. There is such a strong instinct to get at your canvas, and to mix your palette. Properly, the putting on of the paint ought to be a mere adjunct to manly study. Every line, mass, colour, expression ought to be known and felt off the canvas. When once this light has dawned a new world of pleasure is opened.

Again, as men get older, there is a danger of resting on their oars, of living on past knowledge. Just the wrong plan! The right plan to perpetuate youth and joy is to assume that you never yet knew anything, that you have all to learn. This will not actually enfeeble you, for your work will include the results of past knowledge. But the posture of mind will be far grander, because far nearer to the child; which, in the kingdom of art, as in the kingdom of Heaven, is the only Prince.

To W. D.

Happy hour when I made my first square! I remember it well. It was on 18th February 1848 at 11 P.M., if you wish to know. It introduced me to a new life. But for many years, twenty perhaps, I was afield among the ancients. Now Brother C. is more to me than Themistocles or Abbot Sampson, or

Boethius, and T. A. is more than Pericles or Alexander the Great. The glory and dignity of a living man grows and grows more and more. What! make cruel fun of a living man who may die to-morrow and mount high above you in the "air of glory whose light does trample on your days." Nay, a redeemed man is a resplendent thing to meet in a lane, or in a parlour, or anywhere. "Your brother whom you have seen." If you love not him, *a fortiori*, how can you love Him whom you have not seen?

To C. M.

10*th June* 1875.

Walked to Fitzroy Square, and called on F. Madox Brown, who is a delightful man, cram-full of all that makes my mental life sweet and pleasant. A visit to him is like a walk on a breezy shore with the scent of cockles, and mussels, and sea-weed. M. B. described some pictures by Millet now exhibiting in Bond Street. Walked there and saw them. They are a sort of finished studies in oil; rough, bold, bestowing all attention on action, composition, sentiment, colour, and putting in no detailed form. Much what I expected. Instructive and interesting.

I said to Madox Brown, "Millet only exhibited twenty-eight pictures in thirty years." F. M. B. "But that was a large number." But of what sort were these of which one a year was enough? Now I see. The subject was amazingly simple; *e.g.* a peasant in a gray nook of the village chopping wood,

wedge and mallet, all alone, profoundly alone. Rough, colour fine, action exact, the right moment; all things primeval, woods dark, obscure, solemn; features expressed as you see them at sixty yards off, fingers not to be separated by the eye, *i.e.* they are roughly indicated, yet the Main Thing is held to scrupulously; the poise of the mallet, the crook of the knee, the "go" of the whole action together. And so, with the combined effect, whites, grays, browns; with touches (or *patches*, for there is no "touch") of blue or bit of red—the *Wholeness* is the thing, and the Homeric simplicity, force, directness

THE mutually distinctive effects of certain pursuits reconcile one to much imperfection in the ideal of life, *e.g.* The Mathematical and Imaginative modes of action are clearly cross currents, and though a man might say, "How happy could I be with either," he must put one or other away, or be as double-faced as Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy.

23rd June 1875.

ABOUT twelve years ago there were woodcuts in *Good Words* and other periodicals with "F. W." in the corner. These were of a better sort than the rough and ready scribble usually seen. Then the "F. W." found its way into the *Cornhill* under Thackeray, and was attached to illustrations of Thackeray's *Philip*. These illustrations were very admirable in quality. Among the studios, *e.g.* from J. C. Moore, came in-

formation. "Walker? Fred Walker; yes, I know him. You wouldn't think he had anything in him, but he has a fine head, a sort of Greek head, you know. His family is humble. He hasn't much to say for himself, but he's a clever fellow, and he takes such pains. I heard that when he wanted a small bell handle for one of his woodcuts he heard of one at Hampstead and went over on purpose to draw it. So with everything."

1864-65? "Have you seen Fred Walker's drawing at the 'Old Water Colour,' from *Philip*: 'Philip in Church'?"

"Yes, and a splendid piece of execution it is."

1868. At D. G. R.'s—a goodish painter, but an intolerable "swell," well connected, to Howell:—

"Oh, by the way, you're the man, Howell. You see—aw—I've asked Fred Walker to supper, and I want to entertain him, and you see—aw—I can't very well ask my own set—to—to meet him—aw, his sisters I'm told keep a bonnet shop somewhere—aw"—etc.

1869. "Frederick Walker, Esq., A.R.A."

"Have you seen Walker's 'Ploughing' at the R.A.?"

"Yes: very powerful. I like it best of anything there." D. G. R., "I say! I'm told that Graham has given Walker 1000 guineas for his 'Bathers,'" etc.

1875. "Died at the early age of forty-two, Frederick Walker, A.R.A. We can ill afford to spare men so conscientious in all they did," etc.

June 1875, at R.A. J. S. looking at the last picture F. W. sent to the R.A., "The Right of Way": Vagrant mother, little boy afraid of sheep.

Well-dressed visitor to companion: "Now *there's* a picture! Very bad, wretchedly executed. Look at that sheep; its legs are as long as a pig's! Look at the grass! Abominable!"

What a Requiem!

J. S. "Walker of course. Not one of his best. Very fine in quality. Exquisite perception of grays in sky and distance."

J. S. at "Old Water Colour," June 1875:—

"The Old Gate."—F. Walker. "Wonderful, delicate, tender, true, powerful. What a world of study it must have cost! What mental and moral endurance and concealed excitement and energy!"

"Yes, this sort of strain probably killed him."

We saw together his "Mower" in the "Alms House Grounds," and thought it meant,

> There is a Reaper whose name is Death:

the old man—the chirping, feeble old men who sat beyond the daisied lawn, cram-full of character and power of the Shakesperian sort, "Second childishness and mere oblivion": one "sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything,

> His big manly voice
> Turning again toward childish treble pipes,
> And whistles in the sound."

Another, keeping up to the last, an old, old, chirping Robin with a red, full breast, who "had a grand-

father, bless your soul, as lived ten year longer!" The Mower has mown F. W. down at last; but every touch of those careful woodcuts—the bell handle included—every faint gray wash and stipple of his water colours, every palette-knife stroke of his larger canvases survives; "for the artist never dies."

And *we* shall either die in the midst of our days, or we shall come to this "second childishness and mere oblivion" if we survive our strength. In the sunshine, with chin on breast, we shall look vaguely, half cheered, at the daisies, and recall days long fled. It will be very important to carry down into those

> Vast solitudes and awful cells,
> Where heavenly contemplation dwells,
> And ever-musing melancholy reigns,

some abiding "patience and comfort" better than vague recollections of pleasures long gone, ambitions long thwarted or fulfilled and decayed.

"He gained from Heaven, 'twas all he wished, a friend." That is a short allowance, and all a man's eggs had better not be in one basket, for change and death hold such at their mercy. Only Supreme Wisdom can pick us out our friends, and then they are made as slowly as geologic formations; or if not, with the same mighty powers of central fire and upheaval; but mostly deposit, with supervening strokes of elemental heat or shaking.

Let any man take a case in his own life—see how it has been brought about. It may begin in a trifle.

One of my oldest friendships[1] began at the age of fifteen, in a childish taste for acid-drops. Sow an acid-drop, and you grow not only a friend but a whole circle of *his* friends, who uphold your soul for a lifetime. Who would think of beginning a deep and true friendship with an acid-drop? (Though many an unguarded acid-drop ends a friendship which nothing can replace.) Innumerable delicate circumstances of relation of age, residence, family environment, temper and temperament, pursuits, etc., create such a web of material as only the great Designer can put on the loom.

Thank God for friends.

To J. S. B.

6th December 1875.

O ye Frost and Snow, praise Him and magnify Him for ever.

How are we to strike the balance between the sense of beauty and grandeur, which must arise if we look on God's great ways in nature at all, and their frequent accompaniments of the groaning of creation? The Lord help us to preserve an even balance and give us to see a little "light in His light." At best we can see but little—very, very little. May that little not be all mistake, and misapprehension, and misquotation.

Work has gone on first-rate—four months uninterruptedly. I've even found out a maxim of painter's philosophy which defeats the dark days; viz. that for certain elements in a picture the worst days are

[1] With Mr. W. T. Bolton.

the best. For "effect" certainly; for the linking of the greater lines and forms and masses into a whole. One is apt to *see too much* on bright days. As to *mode* of work, I am finding entirely new and satisfactory grooves. I never enjoyed work more. I never saw the deep meaning of Audrey's remark in *As you like it*, "What *is* Poetry? Is it honest in deed and word? Is it a true thing?" as I have seen it the last three months. I should like to have known that woman. She was a true Briton.

To C. M.

24*th January* 1876.

Pall Mall Gazette. Notice of death of Jean François Millet. Aged 60.

What is fame? How obtained?

This man is unknown, yet well known. Unknown to the populace, well known to the man of culture. Yet he lived half his life in a village in France, going among the hamlets of France as solitary as a coot; in barns, in wide waste-fields, among potato-heaps, on portentous evenings, when the labourer hove up against the bars of fading horizon light and looked solemn at him. Wherever Labour stooped in patience to endless tasks that only yielded bare life, there he was drawn to dwell and watch with the eye of Johnsonian compassion and melancholy—

> (When lonely want retired to die:
> Of every friendless name the friend)

and with Johnsonian powers as a painter he brought

the mind of Æschylus, and a sort of Phidian sense of the sublime-at-rest, into the potato-field and the out-house, and transfigured a chaff-cutter, a sickle, or a mallet, till it became the hammer of Thor, or the "thrashing instrument having teeth," which Amos might pass in a Vale of Ephraim, while his prophetic word became too heavy for the land to bear.

Millet was a pupil of Delaroche. I never saw much of his work; only two pictures; but they were enough. "Ex pede Herculem." I know them all.

I know little of Millet's history, but it might well be this. "I come from the fifth estate of man; the Brown Land, where the sky is gray and cold, with none but ominous gleams, and a few quick-passing shafts of sunlight travelling along the furrows—nay, from the very borders of the sixth estate, where the light is darkened in the heavens thereof, and where none but God and good angels follow the retreating forms of the inhabitants into the mysterious glooms where no man cares for their souls. I came from the very womb of toil and hardship, and because of the ascetic strength of soul which God gave me, I went upward to fetch the implement of art, that I might monumentalise what the dwellers in the first, second, and third estates will not consider or care for. I will compel some of them to reflect, and force them to see the furrows of the vast estate where all the roots of their comfort and prosperity lie forgotten, while on the side of the oppressor there is power."

So in the "Exposition," and in the Collector's

"Gallery," and in the "Cabinet," he took French society by the throat unaware, making them look by the force of his genius.

To J. E. V.

1*st July* 1876.

THE life of Harriet Martineau is strong on me at present. When the "Orthodox" begin to frown and curse and maledict, and send everybody into blackness of darkness who does not hold their precise creed, that is more from beneath than from above, and never does any good. And I must say that the lives of some "professors" are below the moral elevation of many who do not see the evangelic scheme at all. What shall *we* say to these things? Our position is simple. If Harriet Martineau has a right to avouch her unbelief, we have as much right to avouch our belief. We can do no other. When we have done this, and have exemplified it as far as human infirmity permits (Alas, for *my* failures here!), then our responsibility ceases. George Herbert gave me twenty-five years ago a strong watchword, "Thou shalt answer, Lord, for me," and it is enough. God knows if H. M. was true to the core—I don't. I can't unwind her seventy-four years of act and thought, and if I could, who made me a judge or a divider? Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? He grasps her now, and not an atom shall be wanting in the justice of Divine love. But all her strength of mind and will and honesty of avowal and nobility of action does not shake me:

> What we have felt and seen
> With confidence we tell,
> And publish to the sons of men
> The signs infallible.

We have something far better and sweeter to do than howl at Harriet Martineau. We have a right to our little tale, as she had to hers, but she must excuse our being shaken and ashamed. Batter down Revelation with the eighty-ton guns, and you have empty shrines, and empty hearts, and dark homes, and ghastly gaping walls and bulwarks.

But we don't *find* this. Walk about Zion and consider. *I* don't see a shot-hole. I see the "temple-haunting martlet" building even on the "coign of vantage"; for the air is delicate: "the swallow finds a nest for herself where she may lay her young," and even the callow nestling, like Brother Fosket, whom I hope to meet in class to-morrow, is as safe as in the groves of Dodona.

I've been poking about Zion for near thirty years, a poor limping tramp, let in and tolerated as yet, and I can't but aver that I see nothing but strength and beauty in Zion; green pastures, still waters, strong towers, vines and olives and shady fig-trees, quiet resting-places, springs that bubble more and more brightly and spring up like Jacob's well. I am "deluded," am I? But I know as sensible men *in* Zion, as I know out of it, and we compare notes, and must speak as we find. We "can no other."

To C. M.

13th September 1876.

AFTER a good day's painting, as I lay on the sofa tired, my experience was the whole Book of Psalms at once—the joys and the anguish both going on at the same time; the strange sense of pressure; the restless storming of the soul; the flashes of peace, joy, thankfulness; the deep-down under-stratum of rest, with the apparently intolerable sense of hindrance and vexation; the pleading for deliverance with the acquiescence in the blessedness of trial—"Oh, who can explain this struggle for life," and yet the sense of steadfast calm?

> Does the road wind uphill all the way?
> Yes, to the very end;
> And must I travel all the day?—
> From morn to night, my friend.
>
> CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

One help in the way of endurance is to look for no remission.

Don't, as you read this, confuse *studio* despondency with personal despondency. The two things run a little into each other, but are entirely distinct. The higher satisfactions of my life are built far above the marshy lands of professional success.

4th November 1876.

I SHALL never forget one hour in the Highlands. We dismounted from our "pownies" and climbed to the summit of "Dark Lochnagar." We went across a desolate field of huge stones smoothed by the rains

and weather of age and age. The guides took us to the brink. We saw only mist. After waiting for half an hour the mist swirled up, as if boiling—disparted in drifts—and we saw wild jagged teeth of ancient rocks, and a terrific precipice and a dim lake far below, and glimpses of immense distance. But in a minute all was a wall of mist again.

In this fashion, through rendings of a misty veil, I now and then catch glimpses of the absolute *good* of trial—I see a success better than success, I mean in every respect.

And in spite of the torture of "no results," one sees that steady work day by day must keep us from ruin at least, and justify us in the sight of God and man.

In the wakeful dead of night, when dark thoughts gathered, I burst away from them—hearing the wind whistle and the cold sleet fall—to pray for the poor, the needy, the tried, the tempted, the sick, the dying. The relation of such prayers to the *mode* of their answer is a great perplexity to the understanding, but I found that for the offerer himself they brought immense soothing and deliverance.

To J. F. H.

14*th November* 1876.

I HAVE been all the happier lately from a heightened perception of two reasonable truths. 1, That there is a sort of greediness and unfairness in expecting to gain, not only the transcendent inward joys of

painting and general study and the ravishing delight in Nature which they evolve, but also the same money rewards or rewards of fame which men obtain who find no interest in their daily work, except for what it brings. 2, "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers tribulations"—a strange proposition to any principle but that of faith, and an impossible one, but one of the most blessed and most simplifying principles if it can be received. It is allied with the beatitude which turns reviling, persecution, and all manner of evil to gold and pearls, yet its blessedness is partly to be reasoned out. *E.g.* you are poor. But poverty arrests your pride, your sloth, your sensuality. It makes men ride over your head; they drive you here and there, but they drive you to forbearance, meekness, submission, tenderness. If they drive you over the edge of life, then after that they have no more that they can do; they have let slip the leash and can hold you no longer, and you are with God. But short of that, they can only benefit you by their oppression, etc. The simplicity of such truths, when really seen into and realised, is that they cut away all entanglements at once. Half the worries of men consist in some contest with neighbours for the acres or the percentage or "the pas" (the highest room at feasts), or the establishment of a name or a family or some other futile good, whereas even Diogenes saw into the philosophy of the tub and the hollowed hand instead of the cup. The imperfection of the stoical escape from evil was: 1, That

it was not the escape of love, but of grim resolve; and 2, That the cartilaginous old salts who were able to carry it out were only able to compel *themselves.* They could not teach the many to do it—the weak to do it. But the faith of the Gospel, instead of making "cowards of us all," would make heroes of us all, and without the misery of conscious heroism would bestow the content and blessedness of *the thing.*

However, the Gospel neither preaches stoical principles nor stoical barrennesses. It leaves the varying framework of life from king to beggar untouched, except by an inward power and life which would equalise all.

FRAGMENTS

December 1876 (Saturday, 4 P.M.)

RETURNING from Bethnal Green Museum. Enjoyed the visit to the full. All the Dulwich pictures here and loan pictures from modern collections—interesting in ways so subtle as to baffle all words. A lot of small Stothards, both in oil and water-colour; a large Flaxman of "Aurora leading up the Pleiades"; an Indian-ink drawing, two feet long, which *fills* me—as sublime, as mysterious, as lovely as night crowned with stars. Even Blake did not reach this kind of unutterable quality. Milton and Shakespeare did, and Tennyson at his most ethereal.

The humanity of the place, too! The torrents of

influence flowing to the East of London fill me with deep satisfaction.

"O my wondrous Mother-age."

WHEREAS a little vine leaf by Mieris (over a marble bas-relief, with every crack and stain and broken Cupid's nose in it elaborated by a month of labour) has each rib and worm-hole carefully painted, and one of Turner's vine leaves is, when looked at near, only a dab with a palette knife; yet I know one of Turner's solid landscapes moves you deeply, while Mieris only excites a sort of microscopic interest in certain moods, and becomes a pain and burden in other moods. Even so it is, I affirm, of all true finish and great life projects. Rembrandt said, "A picture is finished when the painter has expressed his intention."

NO Christian believer, however much he may feel the benefit of trouble, ought to *make* a single one for himself. The doctrine of penance is from beneath. But he ought not to murmur at a single one made *for* him.

ONE cure for difficulty is to have more of it. "A soul inured to pain, to hardship, grief, and loss," is a fortunate soul.

Truth is often *inverted* more than people believe. They believe that riches, luxury, ease, are blessings, whereas they are nothing of the sort in most cases.

Certain airs are alterative—certain medicines—certain Truths.

Thomson's Seasons read six times will drive out the overplus of Tennyson-ity. As by certain foods you may make your cattle what you will, so with the food of the mind. These facts prove a great responsibility.

In his Journal is the following :—

Walk before breakfast—past old house with rockery.

What unspeakable beauty is there in these half-natural, half-invented combinations of stones and mosses mellowed by time, with all their varied tints of grays innumerable, greens innumerable, purples innumerable, yellows innumerable, brown yellow, and butter yellow, and straw yellow, and red yellow, and green yellow, and crust-coloured yellow—a world of colour—dream-like tones in the chromatic scale, filling the sense with unutterable harmony—immortal, vague thoughts of the colour world—little piled poems, rich in diction, new in thought, suggestive in idea!

Every picture, large or small, will give delight to those to whom it *will* give it, or *can* give it; whether the painter get £1000, or £2, or nothing. And morally and intellectually *here* is the proper painter's reward. *Ich Dien.* Here is both the Law and the Gospel of *that* subject. And what a delivering truth is that I came across, not for the first time, and recorded above: *Ich Dien!*

I see a blessed little eight-inch David Cox in oil at S. Kensington, or at Liverpool, or in a private house. What is it? A little fixed vision of some turn in a lane, some old gate to a common with cottage tops seen over sandy mounds, with some human exquisiteness of joy infused into it. *E.g.* a kite flying and leaving you to guess who flies it. Done for pure love and "nothing for reward."

A Beethoven sonata, a strain of Mozart, a lyric of Milton, or Keats, or Tennyson. It bewitches you.

Some fat fellow, with thick gold dangling in front, well brushed, etc., "spanking," begins to rave about David Cox; "Skies full of wind, Sir. Good deal of *go* in Cox. Fetches high prices now. That little thing that you're looking at fetched two-fifty at Christie's at Sniggen's sale. Going up in the market. I'm told he only got £3 : 10s. for it."

If dear old David Cox only inwardly realised the delight which can never pass into nothingness given, were it only to *one*, and never forgotten, he would have felt himself well repaid. What care I what he *got* for it? He got hold of me, and cast a spell over me I shall never lose.

It is the fat man's song which so many are taught to sing, alas! And as humming-birds are hunted to death for a fading bonnet's sake, so is the Ariel of art chased into every corner of the Isle of Prospero to imprison him in the pine.

WHILE the aesthetic temperament undoubtedly

brings sublime joys, and has many joyful compensations, it must be kept in view that it has to be taken for better or for worse; and that there come times when it is like the nigger's wife, who was taken back to be unmarried, for she was, "all worse and no better."

Lancashire Proverb.—"It takes three generations to get from clogs to clogs," *i.e.* Clogs the grandfather rises early, works fast, works late, saves his pence, his shillings, his pounds, buys a second loom and farms it, a third loom, a dozen looms, a weaving shed, a factory. His son is brought up severely and gets three factories and a big fortune. *His* son goes to college, to the dogs, to the devil, and his son back to Clogs—clogs—clogs—clogs—clogs.[1]

To C. M.

30*th January* 1877.

Just finished Part I. *Imperfect Genius: William Blake*, by H. G. Hewlett. It is a piece of minute dissection, intended to show that Blake did not realise the fundamental characteristics of the highest rank of genius. 1. Originality, 2. Fertility, 3. Equability, 4. Coherence, 5. Articulateness. He goes about his work well, and dissects minutely; but when the parts are laid out and labelled, it leaves me precisely where it found me—a delighted admirer, full of solemn wonder and unwearied relish. I scarce deny a single

[1] Clogs are the wooden-soled shoes worn by working people in Lancashire.

accusation, or contradict a single criticism. A certain portion of Blake's poetry has a pure charm about it (felt by Wordsworth and many others). A good deal of it is ungrammatical and childish. His prophetic books are the most misty nonsense, with floating fine bits not worth fishing out for a busy man. The serious efforts of the Swinburnes and Rossettis to explain and exalt this part of Blake rouse not even curiosity in earnest. As to Blake's designs, I am ready to concede most, not all, that can be said against them in regard to style and execution. Even the charges of plagiarism, thickly studded in Hewlett's criticism, I shrug my shoulders and let pass: Ossian, the Gnostics, Swedenborg, Shakespeare. Even the question of "mad or not mad?" My verdict is, "mad but harmless." (This opinion of mine is quoted by W. M. Rossetti in his life of Blake prefixed to the Aldine edition of his poems from my article on Blake in the *L. Q. R.*) Yet after every such concession I feel precisely as a loving daughter feels whose genius of a father is permanently touched with softening of the brain, yet who, if she keep him going at seaside places, out for six hours a day, may yet be saved. She knows how people regard him in passing, how he does queer things which make young people laugh and old people cry; that one hour he will write like an angel and the next "talk like poor Poll." The love flows high over all; and even if a letter in the Southport *Visitor* describes him as having insulted the writer on the promenade, and as having promulgated

"dangerous doctrines," calculated to upset the framework of society and to poison the minds of the young, she only glances at it with a sigh: "It will blow over." I regard all such analysis as this of Hewlett's as showing utter incapacity to sound the depths of such a case. Not exactly cruel, but about as if we were to run to earth that old surgeon friend of W. K. P.'s who found out the "sixth sense" and get Sergeant Ballantyne to "tackle him."

Blake before the magistrates for addressing a crowd on the promenade with the doctrines of "Thel"!—Blake brought to book and cross-questioned till he broke into a fury and got committed for contempt of court!—Blake leaving the court with a shake of his fist at the bench, and crying "Amen! huzza! Selah!"—Blake revenging himself when he got out by composing a mystic book in which the Bench figured among spectres of heaven and hell, serpents and genii, and grand Titianesque cloud spaces, and poddling flowers, and crookly ornaments, such as Edie would draw. But are these the things that lower my estimate of Blake? Of themselves they don't raise, but, taken alongside with his *Job* and his *Ancient of Days*, they do.

It is the easiest thing in the world to go on with the "Look at that leg" style of criticism *ad infinitum*. Neither is there any objection to the overthrow of mistaken friends, where they claim a kind of superiority for Blake to which he has no claim.

Flaxman, Fuseli, Varley, Linnell, these men saw the soul in Blake, knowing that the body of his art

could scarcely contain it. This anatomist, with his "origin and insertion" of muscles, murders to dissect the body.

5th February.

In train on way to Westminster. To so many people nothing is "worth while"—not worth while telling, not worth while writing, and yet the incidents of life are pretty similar to all—the same sort of people to see and meet, the same troubles and cares and fears. To most men life seems one dull round, out of which little can be extracted. And why? Chiefly because they have a low opinion of small things. They don't see the dignity of the little. A neighbour is nothing. A man must be Sir Garnet Wolseley or Captain Nares or Charles Dickens to make them care to see him. Not so did Dickens find Sloppy and Kit and Smike and little Nell.

To F. J. S.

30th June.

Good work is such fearfully slow work! How angry I feel with any one who wants to lure me away from the easel ("unless, marry, the prince be *willing!*") I spent all yesterday in—1, Levelling in cobalt and rose madder the clouds in "Going Home," which looked too "worsted like." Clouds are light and airy, and don't show brush marks; and to efface brush marks over a large screen of modulated cloud is as if, instead of flagging a piece of causeway, you were required to pave it with cherry stones one by one.

2, In "smoothing the ravendown of darkness till it smiled" in "Saturn and Vesta," infusing more gold into the dim flesh tints by infinitely small touches.

I feared a bad night, for oil and water produced "Bubble, bubble, toil and trouble," and "What to send to exhibitions" supervened. However, by 2 A.M. I somehow lost myself in foolish fancies, and waking upon the middle of the night knew I had been asleep and should sleep again. Not but that the garden choir sang shrill, and two or three cocks, taunting, far away, lifted up their voices on stilts out of the dawning, crying, "Cock-a-doodle-doo! There's a man in Park Lane! Cock-a-doodle-doo! Who for twenty years! Has been trying to get on! And never will as long as he lives! Cock-a-doodle-doo!" And then the cock's big cousin, the steam-whistle, screamed in far perspective, "Just what I always said myself!" And then the muffled rumble of the train to the north murmured, "Let us leave him to his devices; he doesn't do what we always told him!"

But two verses seemed given me for my comfort.

I shall triumph evermore,
Gratefully my God adore—
God so good, so true, so kind;
Jesus is a thankful mind.

I shall suffer and fulfil
All my Father's gracious will.
Be in all alike resigned:
Jesus is a patient mind.

5th July.

As hurricanes in the Tropics destroy many a fair building, and uproot many a painfully-cultivated garden of bliss, so the storms of life, as life goes on, sweep against one's studies. One of the George Herbert's tempests falling all night will make you forget a deal of Horace. Who is Horace when the soul is being blown about by the winds of Eternity? Even as to painting, I take more and more pains just because I live more and more above it. Conscience is better than taste as a cloud-compeller. If life is short, if art is long, if the night cometh, more reason why I should flee from *daubing* or haste. Let us get one picture done, round and sound, and see it solemnly launched on its voyage, and then let us fit out another on the stocks, lay

> The keel of oak for a noble ship
> Scarfed and bolted, straight and strong.
> With timbers fashioned strong and true,
> Stemson and keelson and sternson knee,
> Framed with perfect symmetry.

Here is the difference between the men of faith and the men of sense and time. One would think that the glories of heaven and the fires of hell would kill all art and science and poetry and wit and humour. My witness is that, all other things being equal, Godliness is profitable unto all these things.

> Where Reason fails with all its powers,
> There Faith prevails and Love adores.

He thus describes his last visit to Scotland :—

To Mrs. TAYLOR.

27th July (5 P.M.)

THE scenery, of course, is of the grandest kind. *The Lord of the Isles* describes the region, and in the camera obscura of memory such scenes are the very finest on which to feed poetry and painting. We had always in view the hills of which Christopher North has this exquisite line—

Morven, and morn, and spring, and solitude.

The Island of Mull, purple-peaked, was behind us. Ben Cruachan, chiefly invisible, was before us, seventeen miles away.

The weather was treacherous and perfidious to the last degree. If we climbed a hill we had to come in with boots sopping and soaking, and clothes which had to pass half their time before the fire. The boots got hard and unpleasant, and it was not easy with so much drying to get it thoroughly done. Again, the winds of Morven and elsewhere, gusty, wailing, are good in Ossianic poetry and around moated granges in which you don't reside and only write about ; but in an attic with the window open, when you don't sleep on the first intention, these night winds and resounding rains are another thing : they become storm spirits. Then come those piercing chirrups, which, just as you are dozing off, slit the thread of drowsiness, and then the huge cock-crows and the hollow lowings of the farm make your heart within you

desolate, and cast such forlorn lines over your life as you never have in daylight, or when you can move about. Let me record, to the praise of grace, however, that in my wakeful nights, which were several, I found deep within a sweet something which assured my heart, and which would have made the waking hours pleasant but for the resulting depression of the next day.

When at 8.10 A.M. on Thursday morning I found myself on the majestic *Chevalier* in the morning light and morning air, the pale green and white wake of foam streaming a mile behind us from the powerful paddles, the bow of the vessel "flying, flying South," my spirits rose 75 per cent. Yet so *very* kind and considerate and affectionate were all the friends that this winged exultation seemed almost ungrateful.

As I sit in the silence of this sweet July evening, having eased off the sense of travel, I am profoundly thankful, on the one hand, that we are favoured with such a circle of friends among the very excellent of the earth, and, on the other hand, that I am safely home again.

To F. J. S.

30th July. In garden, 7 P.M.

I GOT sixty small sketches and other memoranda during my boatings and goings among the islands on the coast of Scotland. Ever since I was sixteen this habit of constant seizing of something rather than nothing has been my chief resource for landscape in

the studio. And indeed, for passing effects or incidentally epic lines, this is the *only* way. Other men go, as friends of ours now are going, for two months to Arran with boards 2 feet 6 inches long or more, and they sit for a week and paint "The Goat Fell, Arran, as seen from Water-Colour Creek," or "Ben Much Whisky from the foot of Ben More Whisky." When they come home they mount a dozen large and careful "views" and make up a good portfolio. And what can anybody do but admire the serene gray hills and rocks with boats and nets drying, while a Highlander smokes a short pipe just where "the figure is needed"? I can't do the like o' that. No; it isn't in my way at all. What I do is to grasp right and left at everything striking which promises some day to rise into what I think a solemn or sweet distance; or to give a rock for Sir Bedivere to clank his iron heel on. But lo you! while Mr. Briggs will buy the view of Ben More Whisky, because that was where he shot the monarch of the glen, and felt as if his foot was on his native heath, and rejoiced over it at the "Cuil Fail" with Tonald and much whisky: I say Mr. Briggs won't even look at Sir Bedivere; never heard of the gentleman; thinks he was a cracked friend of Burne Jones's, who did those confounded fish-coloured pictures at the Grosvenor Gallery, and says he must be going.

We may here allow the reader to take leave of our friend in a cheery mood. Not too long did it last. He returned home

weary and somewhat over-excited by his journey. Insomnia commenced. Dark clouds hovered over and around him. His later letters are touched with a solemn pathos—the low wailing of a minor key seems to make itself heard in them. He saw the dark valley before him, and, as it were, mentally grasped the hands of those who loved and watched over him in a prelusive farewell. No need to follow him in his sad bereavement. His latter years were spent in gloomy though peaceful and painless inaction. But they are past, too, now; and he has learnt the meaning of those transcendent words, clearly or dimly inscribed on every human heart in its upward yearning:

"In Thy light shall we see light."

POEMS

*** Of the following poems the first was composed in childhood, and may be worth preserving for the Blake-like simplicity pervading it. The next, "Oh let me die at Dawn," was composed in youth, and printed, together with some others, in *Blackwood's Magazine* for the month of September 1841. The third, "Restless clouds of dusky gray," was also written in early manhood. The rest are the productions of his maturer years.

POEMS

LINES COMPOSED AT THE AGE OF NINE YEARS

Little birds that sing so sweet,
They deserve to taste their meat ;
With their little eye-peeps see,
Singing on the cherry-tree.

In the eve they close their eyes :
Lord of heaven and earth and skies.
In the morning they do sing
Praises to their God and King :

Sing to Him their joyous notes,
Warbling with their little throats.
They've no storehouse, barn, nor corn,
But God feeds them night and morn.

Oh let me die at dawn,
The stir of living men
Would call my waning spirit back
Unto its home again.

But at the early light
  Existence seems afar,
Back in the depths of parted time
  As fading planets are.

Let me go forth alone
  Before the sun uprise,
And meet the springing of the morn
  In its own distant skies.

Yes ! let me die at dawn,
  The stir of living men
Would call my waning spirit back
  Unto its home again.

Restless clouds of dusky gray
Fill the sky at shut of day,
Wandering on in solemn hosts,
Flitting dark and purposeless
As a vessel in distress ;
Flitting on like unlaid ghosts.

Where the gusty south wind passes,
Bending all the tufted grasses,
Sighing in the bladed sedge,
By the moorland water's edge,
Making every bulrush whistle,
Blowing down from every thistle.

On the slope of every hill
Seems to shudder every tree,
Every poplar seems to be
Sighing loud against its will ;
Little riplets sweep the river,
Blinding every clear reflection,
Driven in this and that direction
As the curdling waters shiver.

Where the sky has any light,
'Tis a wild and fearful gleam,
Like the spiritual beam
Of the lonely northern night,
Where the muffled sledges go,
Flying shades in wastes of snow.

Not a star can pierce the cover
Where those wide-winged shadows hover ;
Not a note of any bird
When the wind a moment ceases,
And the sand-drifts fall to pieces ;
Not a chirrup can be heard.

Oh, how very strange and lonely
To be walking in the meadows,
As a shadow blown with shadows ;
As it were a spirit only.

Not a memory of the sun
Crosses the gray waste of thought,
But the silent dead are brought
From their coffins one by one.

She round whom thy arm would twine
When the summer eve was sinking,
And your mutual eyes were drinking,
Thou from hers and she from thine :

He whose voice long since would utter
What thy lips unconscious mutter,
Words of sweet and solemn warning
Spoken till thy heart was stilled,
And ye paced about the field
Silent in the breezy morning :

All the fragrance of the clover,
And the glimmering hedge-roses
Closing as the daylight closes,
Come and flood thy memory over ;

For the clover and the daisies
Which the dew unthinking raises,
Seven new springs have blown above her,
She the lost to thee the lover.

Many bells are tolling slow,
Midnight past two hours ago.
Lightly echoing drips the rain ;
Ghostly lies the window pane
Slanting on the shadowy walls
Where the street lamps' radiance falls.
Sleepless I am staring wide,
Thought and Silence at my side
Wave the hand but close the lip,
And in floating fellowship
Lead my spirit here and there,
Wavering like a gossamer
Over London dim and vast,
Lengthened street and ample square,
Park and garden, tower and stair,
Spire and dome and creaking mast.
Dreadful London, vast and dim,
What thou art no man can tell,
Brain and sense and reason swim,
Scarcely dare my spirit dwell
On thy mingled heaven and hell—
Scarcely watch,
That dark river's quivering lamps
Struggling through its folded damps.

THE LITTLE POOL

There is a little pool in fields remote
(Not many seek it, or admire when found),
Thick set with rushes and broad-bladed flags
In all its creeks among the twisted roots

Of gray old willow-trees; and half creamèd o'er
With pulpy weed, and five-leaved water-flowers;
And in its opening centre, deepening down
Into the fathomless inverted heaven,
Small dwarf oaks, and the crimpy hazel, shake
On breezy days beside the fragrant thorn
That hems it in; and many a little bird—
Quick robin, timorous wren, coquetting finch,
Shy blackbird—in among their trembling boughs
Have sung and loved for twenty summers past.
The oxen's bellow is the loudest sound
Heard by this brink, save when with sudden roar
The thunder stoops and bellows on the ground
Among the pastures, and its fiery breath
One ghastly instant shows the startled trees
Nodding with terror o'er the blackened wave.
All other sounds are soft and sweet and low;
Light winds pass flute-like all the afternoon
Among the reeds; and wild bees, as they pass
To neighbouring clover, bring their soothing hum
To vibrate in the airs that fan its breast;
The cuckoo, when the days are warm and still
Comes quietly above, and satisfied
With two plain notes, repeats them o'er and o'er;
While stock-doves, hidden in the dusky firs
Of belting thickets, tremulous reply.
The coot has made her nest within a cove
Guarded by tangled roots and hanging grass,
And he, who in the hot mid-day will come
Slily across the thistles, there may see
The fleet of four black chicks securely sail
Into that harbour at her bagpipe call—
One plaintive anxious note—herself unseen;
Or, sitting for awhile upon the bank,
May watch the little world of happy life
Beneath and on the surface; down below
The glossy velvet tadpoles wriggle round

The entangled water-weeds, while on the top
Flies numerous dart along, or steer across,—
Some in a coat of green and purple mail,
The roving corsairs of their little sea,
Some trembling on their long tenacious legs,
Swaying like tiny chariots hung with springs,—
Or spiral troops of ever restless gnats
Whirl round and teaze the eye to dizziness.
So full and vital is this nameless pool,
And yet so quiet, that its life might be
Made to portray the tranquil life of thought
Where glittering images sport noiselessly
And fancies chased by reason flutter o'er
The depths through which the heaven of the heart
Lies, the calm reflex of the eternal heaven.

OBLIVION

Oblivion claims and equals all
  Of that which was and that which is;
I hear the distant torrent fall
  And crumble in the dumb abyss.
I see the foaming ages sweep
To perish in the utter deep.

Why, throbbing heart, wilt thou impose
  Thy treasured toil on thankless death,
Who neither aim nor value knows;
  But flings the jewelled drop beneath
The tear-drifts ever plunging down
As rich, as fruitless as thine own?

For dying ever, ever born,
  Much done and nought accomplished,
Man is his own, his fellows' scorn,
  He envies and laments the dead,
And, panting still for something new,
Nought does but *they* were wont to do.

The circuit of the whirling winds
  Scoff rudely at his vague desires,
Which neither law nor fulness binds,
  Whom the sweet course of nature tires;
Who, where broad rivers greet the sea,
Mourns only their monotony.

Oh, cease thy dread o'er-labouring course,
  Thou myriad-tongued, relentless Time!
My soul is crushed beneath thy force
  Of countless motions raised sublime
Before the view of human thought,
Whose order it inherits not.

Here, stretched upon the mountain grass,
  I see the imperious sun ascend,
And watch the sparkling moments pass,
  As from the giddy zenith tend
Those fiery wheels, till he in haste
Has like a gasping racer pass'd.

Then anguished in the twilight see,
  With brimming eyes, the lofty sage
Who watched in deep antiquity
  That sun fulfil his pilgrimage;
His hopes, his tears, with mine the same,
Earth bears no echo of his name.

I bless the dead, whose scattered dust
  Has joined new forms of shifting life;
I bless the soul escaped its trust,
  Its bonds, its wonder, and its strife;
Thee, Christ, I bless, who Death o'erthrew,
Whose Spirit maketh all things new.

A THOUGHT OF GOD

As children dip their fingers in the waves
And feel a shuddering gladness while they see
Their dazzling myriads glitter to the shore,
And hear the wide pervading consonance
That never ceases either night or day,
But fills the hollow caverns of the soul
And makes them sound with vague and wordless thought,
That seeks, but never finds, an utterance:
Even so, O Lord, is any thought of Thee.

Like the deep powers that clothe us when the woods
In summer midnights rest beneath their leaves,
When the full moon stands steadfastly in heaven,
And white stars tremble through the blackened firs
Above a steep and gurgling ravine
That throbs with passion of the nightingale,
And strong imaginations lift us up
To float in visions never seen by day:
So wondrous, Lord, is any thought of Thee.

As in the hamlet meadows, while the sun
Sinks through rich elms and humming sycamores,
And gilds the mosses of an ancient oak
Where coos the ring-dove—gilds the chestnut flowers
And turns the countless gnats to sparks of gold,
And pensive flushes o'er the low church tower,
Whence beats the voice of Time in rings of sound
That seem to vanish in Eternity:
So sweet, O Lord, is any thought of Thee.

As o'er a vast and blossoming champaign,
Its countless fields, its orchards, and its cots
Lashed round with roses, mounts the gladdening sun,
Dances on every brook and window pane;

While all at once the woods burst forth in song,
And every flower-bank waves its fragrances,
And early labourers whistle to the morn,
And curly milkmaids sing among the herds,
And every daisy opens wide its cup
To drink the sunbeams and the flashing dews,
And gleaming gossamers sow the earth with light:
So glad, O Lord, are all who think on Thee.

So fathomless, so wondrous, and so sweet,
So glad, O Lord, the thoughts of dying men
Who meditate on Thee amid Thy works:
Thou, who didst make the mystery of the soul,
And set therein the mystery of the world,
Teach us to see Thee ever, that the abyss
Of craving and unsatisfied desire,
And longings that o'er-arch the firmament,
May rest in widening fulness till the hour
That makes Thy universe complete in Thee.

IMMORTAL LOVE

Who knows the endless wealth of love?
How far its wingèd odours move?
When Mary brake with breaking heart
  Her spikenard o'er her Master's head,
She chose, as erst, the better part;
  Embalmed at once the quick and dead.

We smell on earth its fragrance still,
It curls and wreathes on Zion's hill;
For as its incense rose sublime,
  From heart and alabaster riven,
It filled the ample house of time,
  And every golden hall of heaven.

THE REST

Servant, cease thy labour:
Thou hast borne thy burden;
Thou hast done thy task!
In the violent morning,
When the blast was bitter,
And thy fellows sleeping,
Thou wast out and doing,
With thy stubborn ploughshare
Riving up the hillside—
Get thee home and rest!

In the sweltering noonday,
When thy mates were lying
By the purling runnel
In the pleasant shadow,
Thou, with arm wide sweeping,
And with trenchant sickle,
Filledst thy broad bosom
With the tossing corn.

While from highest heaven
To the western sea-rim
Slowly wheeled the great sun,
White and fierce and cloudless,
Every blazing moment,
Eager and unresting,
Didst thou clasp the harvest—
Haste thee now to rest!

While the west grew ruddy,
And the birds were chanting
Softly, softly, "Cease ye,
Cease your toil, ye mortals,"
Stook on stook behind thee
Didst thou leave to ripen;

But thy arm is drooping,
And thine eye is heavy—
Thou shalt work no longer :
Get thee home and slumber,
Get thee to thy rest !

Cross the lengthening shadows
Of the peaceful fir-groves,
Cross the quiet churchyard,
Where the mossy hillocks
With their folded daisies
And their sleeping lambkins
All say, "Requiescat,"
Lay thee down beside them,
Till the bells chime to thee,
Simple bells that tell thee
"Rest thee, rest thee, rest thee" ;
Till they bring thee rest !

While the huge moon rises,
And the large white planets
Wheel and glow above thee,
Till the cottage tapers,
Swallowed by the darkness,
Leave no human symbol
Underneath the sky.

Sleep a dreamless slumber,
For thine eye shall never
See the gates of morning
Lift their awful shadows,
Nor the gold and amber
Of the heavenly dayspring
Sparkle on the heather
Of the purple moorland.

Thou shalt wake no more !

August 1855.

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